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BENJAMIN  
DISRAELI



*W. D. Howells*

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# BENJAMIN DISRAELI

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*AN UNCONVENTIONAL  
BIOGRAPHY*            

By **WILFRID MEYNELL**

With 40 Illustrations, including 2 Photo-  
gravure Plates

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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## DEDICATION

TO WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT,  
OF CRABBET PARK, SUSSEX,  
AND SHEYKH OBEYD, CAIRO:  
COSMOPOLITAN

DEAR BLUNT,—*A dedication is an author's perquisite: more acceptable than even the cheque of his spendthrift publisher. For this uncovenanted page ceded to the scribbler is his to cede again; twice blessed is he to receive and to bestow. Shelley, with his nosegay to give, cried, "Oh, to whom?" But already his heart well knew the destination. I, for my part, with this bunch of Primroses to give, thrust it in quick fancy first towards this friendly hand, then towards that. Indeed, the formula of dedication seems ready made: "To the most severe of critics" (as she is in all that concerns Dizzy), "but a Perfect Wife." And there are, as we know, names of other ladies that suffice of themselves to make a dull page shine.*

*Yet among these I look in vain for a Dizzy-worshipper*



*so devout as you : ungrateful they to their fastidious admirer ; and failing in that ampler faculty of worship allowed them by our Sex with a generosity suspiciously ungrudging. True, the townsman who brings to you his Primroses, risks bringing you those, staled, that were freshly gathered in your own Sussex copses ; nor am I sanguine enough to hope, in placing your name on the forehead of my book, that its pages will tell you of Disraeli aught that you do not already know, and that we have not dwelt upon together.*

*But there are auguries, for all that, in favour of this conjunction of his name and yours. You, like him, have loved the Arab, man and horse ; and it is my faith that had you lived of old in Egypt, you, vexing the souls of Pharaohs, would have solaced and shortened the captivity of the Children of Israel—Disraeli's own fathers. "Egypt for the Egyptians" on your lips had then meant "Let this people go !" And I recall the time when, even in our Island, and under Hanoverians, you, a Poet, pursued the fickle jade Politics, enamoured of her in England, in Ireland, in Egypt ; enduring sorrow for her sake, yet not living happily with her ever after. Disraeli, on the other hand, paramount in Parliament, was hooted from Parnassus. The pleasure of the antithesis tempts me to make allusion to this one failure of his in a*

*career that otherwise reconciles, over the range of romance,  
and to the very verge of miracle, faith with fulfilment,  
purpose with achievement, wish with accomplishment,  
dream with daily reality.*

*Believe me, dear Blunt,*

*Ever devotedly yours in Dizzy,*

*WILFRID MEYNELL.*

*PALACE COURT HOUSE, W,*

*September, 1903.*



## PREFACE

DISRAELI the Man—Disraeli as son, brother, husband, friend—is the theme of this book. It is an informal study of Temperament ; in its way, and in his own words, “A Psychological Romance.” A record of his public acts—not here attempted, except so far as those acts illustrate his personality—would be nothing short of a History of the reign of Victoria. Our England was, indeed, his chess-board ; and I take for granted in the reader, or dispense with it, an acquaintance with the progress and issue of the game, of the detailed moves of his pawns, his knights, his bishops, his Queen even. What I have striven to make evident is the motive that informed the hand—not the hand of an automaton.

Of his multitude of speeches—(hardly one of them all but is redeemed from the dominant dulness of *Hansard* by some flash of individuality in phrase or thought)—I cite only those that help to elucidate his human story ; and the same may be said of the million words he contributed to our Fiction with a Purpose. With that Purpose I am much concerned ; hardly at all with the placing of Disraeli as a Man

of Letters. Von Angeli, when he painted the Minister, said he never saw his face, he saw only a mask ; and Millais, at the end, produced a corse. That seeming mask was indeed an honest face—that of an onlooker, so unperturbed and so unimpassioned that he never made a grimace, and in public was seen by one long watcher to smile but twice. I fail if the reader does not in these pages make of that mask a familiar, most friendly, and true countenance ; if that corse does not show animation. Yet the writer of the North on this Disraeli of the South must equally fail in his effect who, giving motive to the Sphinx, does not leave him a Sphinx still. The man of mystery, the man who thought, loved, suffered more than he said or wrote or looked, must still remain. If, as the poet dreams, a gem is hard and fixed in proportion to the rapidity of its “interparticled vibration,” so, too, the immobility of Disraeli was the expression of a thousand activities only too quick, too varied, to be caught by the casual eye.

The legend of Disraeli the Adventurer is here submitted to that test before which legends in general lapse ; and with the common result. The consistency, even the pertinacity, of his political aims can be traced, as a Gulf Stream, through changing tides of the nation's mutable politics, more definite, more cohesive than they, but of a different impulse, of a more tempered quality ; not always understood even when

appreciated and felt. Less of an Opportunist (which every English statesman, being the servant as well as the leader of public opinion, may honourably be) than the many among his contemporaries, or than his great Antagonist most of all, Disraeli did not easily take the party label. Hence he had his early adventures at the polls. But the crude representation that he was first a Radical and then a Tory to serve the day's purpose, and in defiance of his own fixed individuality—that rude legend, repeated to this very day in Memoirs that will carry, if uncorrected, false weight with posterity as the evidence of Disraeli's contemporaries—dies hard. Contributory anecdote, such as that about an early and implicating membership of the Reform Club, has been traced to its sources; and the base smaller coinage in daily currency is here similarly nailed to the counter at which Disraeli long traded for the nation—with such excellent profits, whether in the case of Suez Canal shares, or a Picro della Francesca for the National Gallery.

The volubility hitherto has been all on the side of Disraeli's less than friendly critics; and with the statement that he placed the Crucifixion in the reign of Augustus, we are asked to test his capacity as historian; and are told that he once thought the Andes the world's highest mountains—and that is his own highest measure in geography. If the task of freeing Disraeli from some of the myths that obscure

his true story has fallen to one who is not a conventional member of a political party, the result, it is hoped, will not be less welcome to all "true blue" Dizzyites, "true blue" at least in the sense in which R. L. Stevenson proclaimed himself a "true blue" Meredithian.

In Disraeli's case, emphatically, the style was the man. His own acts have a close relation to his own words ; and, as he said, so he did, them. As far as may be, therefore, I have left him to tell his own tale. Lucky is the biographer for whom Disraeli's always self-revealing novels exist ; and the classic *Biography of Lord George Bentinck* ; and the *Home Letters*, shrewd as 'Walpole's, yet unlike his, since they are lighted and warmed at the constant fires of a son's and a brother's love. Accordingly, too, I have gathered together Disraeli's letters—some published already in scattered papers and books, others here for the first time. To these are added the spoken word—Table-Talk—the Table of Grosvenor Gate and Downing Street, of Bradenham and Hughenden, and that of the Carlton Club smoking-room ; even that Table of the House itself, which he once felt relieved to find safely separating him from certain gesticulating oratory of the opposing Front Bench.

The book then, in its plan, is something of a novelty ; therefore, too, something of an experiment. It is a cross-breed—I would hope a serviceable one—between biography and autobiography. The text, as

it were, is Disraeli's, and mine the commentary ; yet in the commentary too shall be found enough of Disraeli to give the salt, and to atone for any apparent disproportion of space occupied by text and commentary, page for page. The method adopted has at least one large advantage. It imposes less strain on the reader than a more continuous and disquisitive narrative demands. Themes treated with brevity have at least brevity to commend them. They gain in point what they miss in amplification ; moreover, the obvious fitness of the sub-divisions—the rightness of the paragraph form for the matter under treatment—must, I think, preserve the friendly reader from any feeling that he is being fed upon hasty scraps.

My thanks go to those whose friendly help has at times rendered simple for me an otherwise complicated task : to the Duke of Rutland, last left of the Young England leaders, for interesting facts about the birth of the party ; to the Duke of Devonshire, to Lady Betty Balfour, to Lord George Hamilton, and to Sir William Harcourt, for verifications which only they could furnish. For delightful reminiscences of Disraeli, their guest, I thank Lady Lamington and Constance, Countess De la Warr—the bearer of a name long endeared to Disraeli. A daughter of that House, who became, in succession, Lady Salisbury and Lady Derby, the step-mother of one of Disraeli's colleagues in the Cabinet and the wife of another, was his " admirable hostess " at Hatfield in 1851 ; and, " quite a Sackville "



in her "great simplicity," was his report of her. Still farther back, in 1843 Disraeli was interested to meet at Deepdene "a Young Oxonian, full of Young England," and Mr. John Evelyn of Wotton—for it was he—has favoured me with his vivid memories of what occurred on that evening sixty years ago. To the Rev. James Weller and Lady Marion Weller, I am indebted for the intimate Disraeli letter addressed to Lady Marion's mother, the Marchioness of Ely. I thank others among Disraeli's favoured correspondents, including Lady Dorothy Nevill; and, as her husband's representative, Edith, Countess of Lytton. To others, indeed, I count myself a heavy debtor; to Mr. Roger Ingpen, to Mr. Henniker Heaton, M.P., and to Mr. S. T. Meynell, among the rest. Not one of these has, however, a shred of responsibility for the contents of this book; least of all for any passages of it in which their own names occur.

To the former biographers of Disraeli the author has elsewhere made acknowledgments; and it remains for him now to give his thanks to the firms of publishers to whom he has found himself especially, even if not formally, indebted—particularly Mr. John Murray, Messrs. Longmans & Co., and Messrs. Constable & Co., names that are closely associated, in one way and another, with Disraeli's own.

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**BIRTHPLACE OF BENJAMIN DISRAELI.**

**No. 6, King's Road, Gray's Inn, now 22, Theobalds Road**

*[To face p. 1]*



# BENJAMIN DISRAELI

## AN UNCONVENTIONAL BIOGRAPHY

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### I TALK

#### *From the Cradle*

Disraeli, asked by Lord Barrington where he was born, replied :

"That is not generally known. I was born in the Adelphi, and I may say in a library. My father was not rich when he married. He took a suite of apartments in the Adelphi, and as he possessed a large collection of books, all the rooms were covered with them, including that in which I was born."

Disraeli did not here speak as an eye- or ear-witness. His birthplace was No. 6, King's Road, Gray's Inn, now 22, Theobald's Road. If Lord Barrington accurately caught his words (where a slight confusion might easily occur between the Adelphi and King's Road, the Disraelis having removed from one to the other just

before Benjamin's birth), then Disraeli himself shared what is now known without any doubt to be a popular delusion about his birthplace. This unlucky trip of Talk comes pat at the outset of these Disraeli sayings, if only to illustrate warningly the dubiety always attending the heard and the recollected word, where ear and memory are constantly detected traitors, with no ill intent. "Born in a library" had left mere topography out of court ; and would, standing alone, illustrate a particular Disraelian quality of speech by which the narrowing of a phrase or boundary—here from a district to a room—actually expands it into something elemental and universal. When, for another example, he places the announcing of her accession to Queen Victoria "in a palace in a garden," he transforms a tiny spot into something larger than Kensington or than London, giving it a more generous dimension, and charging it with world-wide and all-time romance. Disraeli, above all others, had the trick of this veritable *multum in parvo* of speech.



### *Schools and School-fellows*

"I can wait."

To Edward Jones, a school-fellow of Disraeli's at Mr. Potticary's school at Blackheath, he addressed in boyish good-nature these words—words which his life for some years yet was to illustrate. Jones and Disraeli

had been friends at home. Jones's father, a surgeon, had attended Mrs. Isaac Disraeli in the time of her trouble when Sara was born ; and, later, a consultation, this time about schools, and with Disraeli the Elder as prescriber, resulted in the Jones boy's going to the Blackheath academy where Ben, aged still under ten, was already numbered among the pupils. An elder boy, still too young to have graduated in the school of patience, does not always welcome the advent of a junior who is a family acquaintance ; but Mr. Potticary's new pupil was in fortune. So he thought then ; and still thought with gratitude long years afterwards. Grown old in the ministry of the Church of England, he looked back three-quarters of a century and wrote : " When my father took me to school, he handed me over to Ben, as he always called him. I looked up to him as a big boy, and very kind he was to me, making me sit next to him in play-hours, and amusing me with stories of robbers and caves, illustrating them with rough pencil-sketches. He was a very rapid reader, was fond of romances, and would often let me sit by him and read the same book, good-naturedly waiting before turning a leaf till he knew I had reached the bottom of the page." " I can wait," said the boy Disraeli, to whom " all things " came, that the proverb might be fulfilled.

All the same, both here at Blackheath and, later, at Dr. Cogan's school at Walthamstow, Disraeli, though



he waited, burned. We get at his mood by the description of school life he gave later in his novels; and it is precisely because he has invested these men in miniature with the passions and the pangs of adults that many schoolboys of ardent disposition will recognise in him their truest historian—boys, like Heine who, at sight of a certain girl, fell into a swoon; or like Byron, who loved so consumedly at eight that he doubted (as we, too, may) whether he was ever really in love again.

“We are too apt to believe that the character of a boy is easily read,” wrote Disraeli, who did not forget, as most men do, their own boyish mysteriousness. “’Tis a mystery the most profound. Mark what blunders parents constantly make as to the nature of their own offspring, bred, too, under their eyes and displaying every hour their characteristics. The schoolboy, above all others, is not the simple being the world imagines. In that young bosom are often stirring passions as strong as our own, desires not less violent, a volition not less supreme. In that young bosom what burning love, what intense ambition, what avarice, what lust of power; envy that fiends might emulate, hate that man might fear.”

He might have added the word “cruelty” had he been condemned to a public school, Jew as he was by birth, and sensitive to all that affected his race



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DISRAELI'S SCHOOLROOM AT DR. COGAN'S.

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His father's proposal of Eton for him was vetoed by his mother, who thought of it, not very extravagantly, as a place where her Ben would be burned. As it was, he found in his very first school, emotional as the trial of his strength must have been to him, a field for his own powers of dominance.

"The hour came," says Contarini Fleming, who more than any of his characters personates Disraeli, "and I was placed in the heart of a little and busy world. For the first time in my life I was surrounded by struggling and excited beings. Joy, hope, sorrow, ambition, craft, courage, wit, dulness, cowardice, beneficence, awkwardness, grace, avarice, generosity, wealth, poverty, beauty, hideousness, tyranny, suffering, hypocrisy, truth, love, hatred, energy, inertness ; these were all there, and all sounded and acted and moved about me."

Once again we note the absence of "cruelty" from the long inventory. Nor does the boy find the novelty anything but exciting and developing :

"As I gazed, a new principle rose up in my breast, and I perceived only beings whom I was determined to control. They came up to me with a curious glance of half-suppressed glee, breathless and mocking. They asked me questions of gay nonsense with a serious voice and solemn look. I answered in their kind. Of a sudden I seemed

endowed with new powers and blessed with the gift of tongues. I spoke to them with a levity which was quite strange to me, a most unnatural ease. I even, in my turn, presented to them questions to which they found it difficult to respond. When they found that I was endowed with a pregnant and decided character, their eyes silently pronounced me a good fellow. My companions caught my unusual manner, they adopted my new phrases, they repeated my extraordinary apophthegms."

The child was here father indeed to the man ; for these words, written five years before he entered Parliament, may well do double duty for schoolboy and for member of Parliament alike. If Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, Disraeli reached Westminster and the Cabinet by way of Blackheath and Walthamstow.

"Everything," the prophetic tale proceeds, "was viewed and done according to the new tone I had introduced. A coterie of the congenial insensibly formed around me"—a Young England party betimes—"and my example gradually ruled the choice spirits of our world. I even mingled in their games, although I disliked the exertion, and in those in which the emulation was very strong I even excelled. It seemed that I was the soul of the school."

The passage is suggestive. Had Disraeli gone to Eton, would he there, too, have controlled his fellows as he did later his fellow-legislators—"just Eton boys grown heavy," Praed calls them? If, on the contrary, they had moulded him, we should have lost Disraeli. A public school or a university has a level to which, if some rise, others descend; it may war against many a town and village provinciality only to impress on its subjects a provinciality of its own—and one of a depressingly monotonous brand. There can be no general rule; for while the (anti-Disraelian) Duke of Argyll might have had his talents ripened and his temper sweetened by contact with equals, mankind must rejoice that Disraeli developed aloof—like Meredith, Rossetti, and Kipling—who, in a crowd, had been worse than enbined, crippled even.

Disraeli was at Potticary's school at Blackheath between the years 1813 and 1817. From 1817 until 1820 he was a parlour-boarder at the school kept at Walthamstow by the Rev. Dr. Cogan, a retired Unitarian minister, who earned some sectional reputation as a Greek scholar, and whose theological views may be taken as some index of Isaac Disraeli's own. Cogan complained that he could never get the Disraeli boy to understand the subjunctive; nor had he much patience with an "if" in after life. His school-fellows were the children of prosperous parents, sufficiently undistinguished in a worldly sense

to point the satiric allusion in *The Young Duke* to the very select school kept by "the Rev. Dr. Coronel," who was "so extremely exclusive in his system that it was reported he had once refused the son of an Irish peer." Disraeli's comrades included F. J. Busk, who did well in later life at the Chancery Bar; Paget, the future Metropolitan Police magistrate; the sons of Baron Gurney, of whom more anon; Benjamin Travers (who kept him in countenance with his "Christian" name); Gilbert Macmurdo and Samuel Solly, F.R.S., known surgeons in their day; Sutton Sharpe, Q.C.; Samuel Sharpe, Egyptologist; and Daniel Sharpe, President of the Geological Society and translator of the Zanthus inscriptions; while Richard and Henry Green, besides being shipbuilders at Blackwall, were, like so many of the later associates of Disraeli, philanthropists. All these Benjamins, Daniels, and Samuels notwithstanding, the school was not a Jewish one. At Disraeli's earlier school, at Blackheath, was a Jew called Sergius; and he and Disraeli (who was not then baptised) used to stand back when the other boys knelt down for prayer; a solitude of two again repeated when, once a week, a master attended to give the little Jews lessons in Hebrew. How far he went in his Hebrew or in his Greek and Latin there is testimony at variance. The truth is that he continued the classics with a tutor after he left Cogan's, and he loved them in later life. Though he refused to



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DR CONNELL SCHOOL 47 NORTH AVENUE,  
Where Elizabeth was educated, 1877-1880

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speak French at the Berlin Conference, he was familiar with French literature to the end of his days.

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"By your account I have not changed since I was seven or eight years old."

This was Disraeli's dry comment on a remark made to him (in the House of Commons when he took his seat in 1837) by a fellow-member—Hawes.

"Do you remember," Hawes asked, "my taking you from school with the Gurneys and giving you a dinner? You are not altered."

The reply seems to indicate that Hawes's manner was not ingratiating—possibly it was too obviously meant to be so. If Disraeli was willing to suffer fools gladly, let them at least be fools on his own side of the House: Hawes was on the other. When, therefore, Hawes, quite in part, said, "We are all waiting for you *to lash us*," Disraeli's comment was: "They may wait." If he did not hustle others—"I can wait"—he himself was not to be hustled—"You can wait."

As he became a parlour-boarder at Dr. Cogan's at the age of thirteen and stayed till he was sixteen, the figures ("seven or eight") flung at Hawes were—well, figures of speech. Some people we all know whom we, serious, refuse to treat seriously. We cannot waste on them the accuracy they can neither

hand on to others nor return to us in kind ; we would not concede to them that it was cold though the mercury was at zero ; we prefer to tell them nothing ; but if they force our tongue, we tell them nonsense—all which prepares a nice confusion for the gatherer and reporter of sayings credibly repeated from mouth to mouth. "Before you can understand Pitt, you must understand Shelburne," Disraeli once said ; and before you can interpret the sayings of Disraeli you must in some instances have an acquaintance with the character of those to whom they were spoken.

One of these four Gurney school-fellows became well known as Russell Gurney, Q.C., Recorder of the City of London, and framer of that Public Worship Regulation Bill which Disraeli offended High Churchmen by sedulously supporting. To his widow, Bayswater is indebted for the House of Rest fronting the Park from the burying-ground that holds the tomb of Sterne. This lady, who lived always in a state of religious exaltation, had a dream when she lost her husband. A bunch of fragrant wallflowers was held out to her ; and these had grown on the wall of Death dividing him from her—an allegory that gave her comfort. The son of another of these Gurney school-fellows was the Rev. Alfred Gurney, a man of deep religious feeling and the author of hymns that reach the rare confines of Poetry.

Other boys besides Jones were Disraeli's friends in the holidays. The house in Bloomsbury Square was the scene of many juvenile entertainments. Mr. William Archer Shee, son of Sir Martin, President of the Royal Academy, has the clearest memory of these functions, of which no invitation card remains to-day. "When I was a little boy, up to the age of ten or eleven," he recalls, "it was a great source of delight to me to go, at each returning Christmas, to the juvenile parties which Mrs. Disraeli gave, and I used to meet Benjamin on these occasions. He was then in his teens, and at an age when a young fellow of seventeen or eighteen had little in common with a youngster of my age. He took little notice of the small fry around him, but walked about and dawdled through the quadrilles, in tight pantaloons, with his hands in his pockets, looking very pale, bored, and dissatisfied, and evidently wishing that we were all in bed. He looked like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, suffering from chronic dyspepsia."

These characteristic impressions of a younger boy, rather interpreted by the bias of after-life, may be supplemented by a few extracts from a letter addressed to me at random, after reading a newspaper article, by a lady who knew the Disraelis in the Bloomsbury Square era:

"In the year 1828, when I was seventeen years of age, I became personally acquainted with Maclise, not

much my senior. My family was intimate with the Disraelis; and it was through them that we knew Maclise. They had told us of a young artist who had lately come from Ireland, and who drew charmingly. . . . You say, 'Lord Beaconsfield put all his hopes in sisters.' And no wonder, with such a sister as he had. My elder sisters were about the same age as Miss Disraeli, and they were intimate friends, and, as a little boy, Mr. Disraeli would ask me to dance with him at children's parties, which I much appreciated. There was no old gentleman out of my family that I liked so much as old Mr. Disraeli, because he talked so kindly to me; and his youngest son, who died early, I also liked. My father died an admiral; he had been twice first lieutenant to Captain (afterwards Admiral) Burney, brother to Madame D'Arblay, whose friendship he retained; and it was there my family, perhaps, got into a literary set. . . . My sister used to tell an amusing story of Benjamin. She was dancing with him at his father's house, and the subject of their conversation was the novel of *Vivian Grey*, the name of the author of which had been so carefully suppressed. He was very amusing on the subject, but made no revelation. The next day it came out in the papers that he was the author."



#### Conversation

"Oh, my dear fellow, I cannot really: the power



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NO. 6, BLOOMSBURY SQUARE.

The residence of the Disraeli family, 1817—1829

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of repartee has deserted me," was Disraeli's response when Bulwer, the host at an evening party in 1832, asked him to be presented to Mrs. Gore.

Society, Disraeli thought, was nothing if not amusing; conversation must be communication; by all laws of exchange the guest should give as well as take.<sup>1</sup> He could not satisfy, nor even gratify, his social instinct by pushing through heated rooms, looking the whole world in the face, yet owing every man and woman of his acquaintance a coinage of the tongue. Disraeli thought stupid people should stay mostly at home, and keep weird relations about dull weather and duller doings—for weird relations. Bulwer knew his man; and the presentation to Mrs. Gore, the beginning of a kind acquaintance between author and author, duly took place, Mrs. Norton and "J. E. L." ("the very personification of Brompton, pink satin dress and white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and hair *à la Sappho*") looking on. Mrs. Wyndham Lewis also was there, and put that good mark against him as a "silent" man—which must have well compensated him for the temporary failure of his "power of repartee."

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"Disraeli," Sir William Fraser says, "was fond

<sup>1</sup> Yet how little "give and take" the most favoured society may yield can be gathered from the confession of Monckton-Milnes, Lord Houghton: "I go out as much as I want and see plenty of clever and agreeable people; but somehow or other get very little good of them."



of inserting little metaphors in his conversation. During the last time he was Prime Minister, while a conference of importance was sitting on the Continent I met him in Pall Mall close to the War Office. It was a bitter cold day ; he had a white silk pocket-handkerchief tied, not round his throat, but over his chin : he appeared to be in the last stage of exhaustion. He stopped me ; and after a few good natured words said : 'Has the dove left the ark ?'

"I thought for a moment that it was some allusion to the olive-branch of peace, and replied : 'If you do not know, nobody else can.'

"He said then : 'It's a dreadful thing for the country.'

"'Oh, you mean the floods. I beg your pardon.'

"I felt that it was very kind of him to stop even for a minute on such a day ; and said : 'We must not lose our Prime Minister.'

"He said : 'Thank you for your kindness,' and walked on."

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"I do not care to be amused—I prefer to be interested."

This was said by Disraeli to a friend and hostess who feared he had not been amused at her dinner-table. *Lothair* does the same tale repeat : "There are amusing people who do not interest, and interesting people who do not amuse," says Monsignor Catesby—

the name by a betraying slip of the pen is once written Capel. "What I like is an agreeable person." And Hugo Bohun adds: "My idea of an agreeable person is a person who agrees with me." "Well," said Miss Arundel, "as long as a person can talk agreeably I am satisfied. I think to talk well a rare gift—quite as rare as singing; and yet you expect every one to be able to talk, and very few to be able to sing."

Disraeli's own early methods as a talker are not easily set out in a formula. He avoided platitudes in his own talk; and platitudes about talk in general do not touch him. The best description of him during his early period is the familiar one given by that naïf American writer, Willis, whose initials, N. P., are not quite justly written Namby Pamby.

"Disraeli," he records after an evening at Gore House, when Disraeli was the author of *Vivian Grey* and in his thirties, "has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and but for the energy of his action, and the strength of his lungs, would seem a victim to consumption. His eye is as black as Erebus, and has the most mocking and lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. His mouth is alive with a kind of working and impatient nervousness, and when he has burst forth, as he does constantly, with a particularly successful cataract of expression, it assumes a curl of triumphant scorn that would be worthy of a Mephistopheles. His hair is

as extraordinary as his taste in waistcoats. A thick heavy mass of jet-black ringlets falls over his left cheek almost to his collarless stock, whilst on the right temple it is parted and put away with the smooth carefulness of a girl's. He talks like a racehorse approaching the winning-post, and the utmost energy of expression is flung out in every burst."

The note of exaggeration is evident in the "bursts" that manage to be "constant" and yet to burst; in the accent laid on Dizzy's partiality for gay waistcoats—a partiality common to a whole crowd of persons in "the days of the dandies"; and perhaps also in the vigour attributed to the delivery of Disraeli, which, if fluent, was usually deliberate. His talk came in a full stream, especially in those early days, when the talking mood was on him. But then, as ever, it needed the mood. Madden says of this same Gore House period that Disraeli, "when duly excited," possessed a "command of language truly wonderful," and a "power of sarcasm unsurpassed." These phrases he follows by allusions to the "readiness of his wit, the quickness of his perception, the grasp of mind that enabled him to seize on all points of any subject under discussion." When, a little later, Henry Crabb Robinson met Disraeli, he thought his talk memorable. "Young Disraeli," the diarist records on this occasion, "talked with spirit of German literature."

The sayings of Disraeli in this book are not set

down as specimen epigrams. They are not always either amusing or in themselves interesting. They borrow their interest from the man who spoke them, and are, for the most part, mere bits of mosaic, nothing when detached, but necessary, each in its place, for the true lighting and shading of the likeness. They are biographical fragments of the daily Disraeli.



### *Of Dinners*

"I ask only good people to dine with me, because on all others a dinner is wasted."

This, at his own table, to a lady who gave signals of distress for further enlightenment. "Ah, but you would know that doctrine if you adored *The Young Duke*"—a novel for which, rather to the chagrin of the author, she had expressed her preference.

The passage under allusion may very well be this :

"A good eater must be a good man ; for a good eater must have a good digestion ; and a good digestion depends upon a good conscience."

Perhaps society's love for "good" people as guests has in this theory its edifying genesis ; only the "goods" have got a little mixed.

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"To enjoy dinner even a hungry man should have silence, solitude, and a subdued light. The

principal cause of the modern disorder of dyspepsia, prevalent among Englishmen, is their irrational habit of interfering with the process of digestion by torturing attempts at repartee, and by racking their brain at a moment when it should be calm, to remind themselves of some anecdote so appropriate that they have forgotten it. It has been supposed that the presence of women at our banquets has occasioned this inopportune desire to shine, and an argument has been founded on this circumstance in favour of their exclusion. Yet at men's dinners, where there is no excuse for anything of the kind, this fatal habit still prevails; and individuals are found who from soup to coffee pour forth garrulous secret history with which every one is acquainted, and never say a single thing which is at once new and true."

This was a favourite topic with Disraeli in his earlier life; and oral traditions are here collated with a familiar and corresponding written passage.

Five months after his marriage he gave at Grosvenor Gate his "first male dinner-party," and it "went off capitally"—naturally enough, with Lyndhurst, Strangford, Powerscourt, Ossulston, D'Orsay, Sir R. Grant, and Bulwer as guests, four of whom were exceptional talkers, while Disraeli, always a perfect host, came to table with the zest of one new at the work. Disraeli loved these feasts. They were, more-

over, in some sort preliminaries to those Parliamentary dinners that were—he knew it well—to come. Peel might turn a deaf ear to to-day's importunity ; but the "sweets of office" were served up on that table at Grosvenor Gate all the same. Within a month of the date of this first male dinner-party he had bidden sixty members of Parliament to his board : forty came. He picked his men as the best ; and only one out of every three could not or would not take his salt. How much he exerted himself during this table-land campaign may be judged by the fact that dull men brightened and pompous ones thawed—he had gaiety and nature enough for two.

"The Duke of Bucks has dined with me," he writes in easy triumph to his Bucks home ; "he was really quite gay, and seemed delighted with everything, which with him is very rare, as society bores him."

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A little later, in a contrary but more abiding mood, and when perhaps the strain and stimulus of the society of women had been mitigated for him, though never wholly remitted, Disraeli said, after a long Parliamentary banquet :

"There are many dismal things in middle life, and a dinner of only men is among them."

His general attitude as a visitor to friends' houses

may be focussed in the following sentence occurring in a letter to his sister, February, 1834 :

"Henry Manners-Sutton, who had come over from Mistley Hall, asked me to return with him ; but as Lady Manners was not there, I saw no fun, and refused."

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He who had written of London dinners as "empty, artificial nothings," as "dull farces," and had declared the usual company to be a "congeries of individuals without sympathy," took all trouble to avoid, in his own banquets, the ills which had vexed his spirit, all his life, in the banquets of others. A host cannot always count on the spirits of his guests, nor even on the triumphs of his cook ; but Disraeli was able, after some of these attempts of his own, to reflect, with Coningsby :

"A little dinner—not more than the Muses—with all the guests clever and some pretty, offers human life and human nature under very favourable circumstances."

During his brief tenancy of 19, Curzon Street—a street close on that quarter of *chefs* whom he rather endearingly described in *Tancred*—Lord Beaconsfield gave only one dinner-party—his last. It was not of men only—it had the Season's beauty as well as its wit. The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland were



*Photo by J. P. Stirling, High Wycombe*

**BENJAMIN DISRAELI.**

From the portrait by D. Maclise, R.A., 1828

*[To face p. 20.]*





there ; Lord Granville (who was soon to pass upon the departed Lord Beaconsfield the best and truest appreciation, whether from political friend or foe) and Lady Granville ; Lord and Lady Spencer (none of these on his own side of the House of Lords : "Turtle makes all men brothers," Disraeli once said) ; Lord and Lady Cadogan ; Lord Bradford ; Lady Chesterfield ; Georgina Lady Dudley and Gladys Lady Lonsdale ; Lord Barrington, his attached secretary, and Lady Barrington ; Lord Granby, the son of the oldest surviving of his friends ; Lord Leighton, whose guest he had recently been at the Royal Academy ; and Mr. Alfred de Rothschild.

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That last name, the name less of an individual than of a family, almost of a race, cannot be passed over by the Disraeli annalist with a bare mention.

Though the Rothschilds were a Liberal family in the heyday of the great Disraeli-Gladstone rivalry, the personal intimacy between the Tory leader and these money kings of his own race was of long standing. Seeing that Sidonia stood as a type of them in *Coningsby*, it is rather curious to note that Disraeli suspected an author whom he did not love—Thackeray—of having an eye on them for "copy." The occasion was that of a banquet at Sir Anthony Rothschild's, given in honour of the wedding of a brother-in-law, Montefiore, with a daughter of Baron de Goldsmid,

Dizzy did not go to it—he was a tied-down politician in 1850—but his wife did. “The Hebrew aristocracy,” he reported at second hand, “assembled in great force and numbers, mitigated by the Dowager of Morley, Charles Villiers, Abel Smiths, and Thackeray. I think he will sketch them in the last number of *Pendennis*.” It was from the host of that banquet, Sir Anthony Rothschild, that the first Jewish baronetcy descended to his nephew, later Lord Rothschild. Round the Rothschilds, in effect, raged the storm of political controversy as to the granting of civic rights and social amenities to the Jews. No family were better able to stand for a cause or to conciliate opponents, nor, when the battle was won (Disraeli helping to win it), to bear themselves with better moderation in victory. These men, by large generosities, and by the leaven of art and literature they have brought into Lombard Street and Park Lane, have more than repaid the confidence reposed in them by the English Islander. Even the Duke of Cumberland would say so, were he living still. Fifty years ago they had become socially a force that already made itself personally felt in any public measure affecting the status of their race: witness a light allusion made by Disraeli to John, seventh Duke of Rutland, after a division in which he had gone into the anti-Semite lobby. “John Manners is a little awkward about the Rothschilds, as he had dined with them on the preceding

Wednesday, and their salt sticks in his throat." Dinners still play their part in the national fortunes. In later years, the political as well as the personal ties between Disraeli and the Rothschilds were drawn closer. It was with their co-operation that he made his great political and commercial *coup*, the purchase of the Suez Canal shares; and when he had at last to relinquish 10, Downing Street to Mr. Gladstone, he had, as one of his friends put it, "no home in town except in the house of Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, who surrounded him with everything that princely hospitality, tried, warm friendship, and cultivated taste could offer."

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Disraeli to Lord Malmesbury, who had just seen the Minister, seated at table at the Carlton with one of the Bores :

"I am the most unlucky man. I came here to meet Colonel Taylor, and the waiter told me he was in this room; but Providence has cursed me with blindness; so, seeing a very big man, whom I took for Colonel Taylor, I rushed to him and fell into the arms of Robert Macaire, who insisted upon my dining with him, made me drink a bottle of champagne, which poisons me, and ended by borrowing fifty pounds."

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To a hostess who apologised to him, late in life,

for the presence of a talking-bore at a small dinner-party :

"I have been really amused and rested."

One such hostess writes :

"Sometimes it occurred at a small dinner-party that some unimportant person, probably nervously anxious to appear at his best, soliloquised most of the evening. If the horror-stricken hostess murmured forth an excuse, Lord Beaconsfield would smile."



**"My Miserable Youth"**

To Lady Derby, as they approached Bradenham after a walk from Hughenden :

"It was here that I passed my miserable youth."

Lady Derby asking, "Why miserable?" Disraeli replied :

"I was devoured by ambition I did not see any means of gratifying."

This was a dark mood. In brighter memories there was, as of old, "no place like Bradenham."



**Smoke**

To Colonel Webster, who said to Disraeli in his later twenties, "Take care, my good fellow; I lost

the most beautiful woman in the world by smoking ; it has prevented more elopements than the dread of a duel or Doctors' Commons " :

" Then you prove that it is a very moral habit."

Perhaps this ludicrous lament of the Colonel's, with a further (not very friendly) lead from alliteration, was responsible for Disraeli's awkward saying : " Tobacco is the Tomb of Love."

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Disraeli was a great smoker in early life, beginning with his Eastern tour in 1830. " I have not only become a smoker, but the greatest smoker in Malta—I find it relieves my head," he said when he was in his twenty-sixth year. At Stamboul a few months later he made the Imperial perfumer's shop his daily lounge and " never went to the Bazaar without smoking a pipe with him " ; and from Cairo he reports : " I have become a most accomplished smoker, carrying that luxurious art to a pitch of refinement of which Ralph has no idea. My pipe is cooled in a wet silken bag ; my coffee is boiled with spices ; and I finish my last chibouque with a sherbet of pomegranate." Some of these pipes, nine feet long, were sent home to Bradenham, and not merely as ornaments. " Tell Tita to get my pipes in order," Disraeli wrote home from town at the end of the summer season of 1834, " as I look forward with great zest to a

batch of smoking." Two years later, writing again from town, he says : "I shall enjoy the day when I may come and have a quiet smoke at Bradenham, first embracing you all before my lips are tainted with the fumes of Gibel." Nor did it all end in smoke; for during the first year of his Parliamentary life he said : "I ascribe my popularity in the House to the smoking-room." Tobacco is the salvation of the Treasury ; and it seems to be fit enough that a cigar should be one of the wands to carry this magician thither.



### *Sun-Worshipper*

To a friend vexed by a rainy day :

"There are two powers at which men should never grumble—the weather and their wives."

All the same, Disraeli was a very literal fine-weather friend, a lover of Phœbus. With Lady Mary Wortley Montagu he could say : "My spirits go in and out with the sun." "As my great friend the sun is becoming daily less powerful, I daily grow more dispirited," he tells Mrs. Austen during his trip abroad to recover health in 1830. Writing home from Granada during that same year, he rejoices : "You know how much better I am on a sunny day in England ; well, I have had two months of sunny

days infinitely warmer." Again he reports progress, "so entirely does my frame sympathise with this expanding sun." Nor did he fear the August heat in Spain : "I dare say I am better—it is all the sun." And once more : "It is all the sun and the western breeze."

Though Disraeli had abundant need for his philosophy in our abominable winter climate (praised occasionally by those who escape its rigours), he had at least a wife who, as the common saying goes, quite fitly to our theme, brought "sunshine to his home." And he took the weather without a grumble. His astrachan coat was his only demonstration against our Island's shrewd east winds and icier northern gales.



**"Contarini Fleming."**

"How delightful it is to have an empty head !"

This must find a place among the many phrases that clamour for a footnote ; failing it, they go to flood that well of falsehood at the bottom of which Truth welters. The "empty head" in which Disraeli rejoiced to his friends in 1832 was a head which had just delivered itself of *England and France* ; or, *A Cure for the Ministerial Gallomania* ("a very John Bull book," he called it), and *Contarini Fleming*.

This was the novel which cost him most pains to



compose and some perturbation at its christening. *Contarini Fleming: A Psychological Autobiography*, was the label of the four volumes when first issued from Albemarle Street in 1832. *Contarini Fleming; or, The Psychological Romance*, was the variant title to be met with in advertisements before *Contarini Fleming, A Psychological Romance* became the final form. Milman, who was Murray's reader, had, in the first instance, objected to the use of the word *Romance*—"he says that nothing should disturb the reality of the impression or make the common reader for a moment suppose that every word is not true." The first edition appeared anonymously. "Who is the author of that odd, queer, natural and unnatural book, *Contarini Fleming*?" Alan Cunningham questioned Mr. Dilke at the office of the *Athenæum*. Disraeli made no *Waverley* mystery of the authorship: the book went from him to his friends and to other likely people, Beckford among the rest. "How wildly original! How full of intense thought! How awakening! How delightful!" These were the exclamations with which the author of *Vathek* began a letter that Disraeli rather tamely annotates as "very courteous." Tom Campbell, too, was "delighted with it," exclaiming: "I shall review it myself, and it shall be a psychological review"; and in three months more Disraeli reports: "*Contarini* seems universally liked, but moves slowly. The staunchest admirer I have



*Bey Serai.*

From the portrait by Count D'Orsay, 1833

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in London, and the most discerning appreciator of *Contarini*, is Madame D'Arblay." Perhaps, in letters home, Disraeli characteristically made the best of reports; for there seems to be a chastened note about the account he long afterwards gave of the incidents of *Contarini's* first appearing:

"I had then" (in 1832), "returned from two years of travel in the Mediterranean regions, and I published *Contarini Fleming* anonymously and in the midst of a revolution. It was almost still-born; and, having written it with deep thought and feeling, I was naturally discouraged from further effort. Yet the youthful writer who may, like me, be inclined to despair, may learn also from my example not to be precipitate in his resolves. Gradually *Contarini Fleming* found sympathising readers; Goethe and Beckford were impelled to communicate their unsolicited opinions of this work to its anonymous author,<sup>1</sup> and I have seen a criticism by Heine of which any writer might be justly proud. Yet all this does not prevent me from being conscious that it would have been better if a subject so essentially psychological had been treated at a more mature period of life."

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli, forty years later, seems to forget that he had so far "solicited" Beckford as to send him, or to cause the publishers to send him, a copy of the work: he remembered only the salient fact that he and Beckford were then strangers. They met for the first time (June, 1834) at the Opera; and Beckford's praises then overflowed to Isaac Disraeli's Persian romance, *Mejnoon and Leila*.

Heine's opinion certainly comes well up to the reference here made to it. "Modern English Letters," he says, "have given us no offspring equal to *Contarini Fleming*. Cast in our Teutonic mould, it is nevertheless one of the most original works ever written : profound, poignant, pathetic ; its subject the most interesting, if not the noblest, imaginable—the development of a poet ; truly psychological ; passion and mockery ; Gothic richness, the fantasy of the Saracens, and yet over all a classic, even a death-like, repose."



#### *Of a Rabbit Mouth*

"There is one fatal defect in a woman—a rabbit mouth. In my young days it spoiled Lady Lincoln, and the only pity is that Lord Orford did not think so."

Lord Lincoln, afterwards sixth Duke of Newcastle, married in the year of Reform (1832) Lady Susan Hamilton Douglas, only daughter of the tenth Duke of Hamilton, and granddaughter of that great admirer of *Contarini Fleming*, Beckford, author of *Vathek*. Lady Lincoln valiantly bore her husband five children ; then, in the August of 1848, she left him, on the plea of going abroad for her health. Soon her name was coupled with that of Lord Walpole, eldest son of the Earl of Orford ; hence the abortive mission of Mr. Gladstone, the friend of both husband and wife,

who found Lord Walpole and Lady Lincoln living near Como as Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence. Mrs. Lawrence was "not at home" to Mr. Gladstone, who returned to England having failed to take captivation captive. In 1849 she had a son, christened Horatio Walpole; and she did not oppose the Bill of Divorce which passed the House of Lords in 1850. Her husband, Secretary of State for War during the Crimean campaign, sought distraction in politics; but scarce found in public affairs compensation for private sorrows. "I am no candidate for office," he says in an unpublished letter, addressed from Clumber, October, 1856, to an intimate; "and will never again burden myself with its obloquies and ingratitude and its sacrifices of health and time so valuable to my estates and my family"—the motherless children aforesaid.

One recalls the advice given to another Duke of Newcastle in Pitt's time—"not to die for joy on the Monday nor for fear on the Tuesday"; and this Duke ceased in a brief while to be a pessimist. The allusion to "my estates and my family," perused a generation later, is enough, however, to make a pessimist of Puck himself; for one of those sighed-over children, not born in love, brought the estates to ruin, and another died in shameful exile.

Disraeli made the acquaintance of Lady Lincoln, then a young wife, in the summer season of 1833 at a party given by Madame de Montalembert; and,

a year later, he renewed the acquaintance at a dinner-party. He thought her "brilliant," and was "engrossed" by her—notwithstanding the "fatal defect."



### *An Unlabelled Politician*

To Mr. Charles Gore, who in 1832 said that Lord John Russell asked after Disraeli's Parliamentary prospects at Wycombe, before his first contest there as a Nationalist, and "fished" as to whether he would support the Grey Administration :

"They have one claim on my support—they need it."

So long as Disraeli, the Radical-Tory, or Liberal-Conservative, or—a designation he himself preferred—the Nationalist, made common cause with Tories and Radicals against the Whigs, the anti-Whigs on both sides were very willing to affix to him their label. Lord Lyndhurst, knowing him well, his temperament, his tastes, his traditions, could never have feared that Lord Durham would really enrol him. At the same time he took care that, so soon as Disraeli should find out for himself that the farmers would not trust themselves to a free-lance, a constituency should be found for him, if he would but don the uniform. After all, when you come to think of it, a man who rises by rule through the ranks gets at last the thing denied

him in his apprenticeship ; for the commander-in-chief becomes a free-lance indeed, but a free-lance with a following.

Greville, in his *Memoirs*, makes this entry under date December 6th, 1834 :

"The Chancellor [Lyndhurst] called on me yesterday about getting young Disraeli into Parliament [through the means of George Bentinck] for Lynn. I had told him that George wanted a good man to assist in turning out William Lennox, and he suggested the above-named gentleman, whom he called a friend of Chandos. His political principles must, however, be in abeyance, for he said that Durham was doing all he could to get him by the offer of a seat and so forth ; if, therefore, he is undecided between Chandos and Durham, he must be a mighty impartial personage. I don't think such a man will do, though just such a man as Lyndhurst would be connected with."

Disraeli here seems to be twisted in order to make a lash for Lyndhurst's back. Greville's ignorance of Disraeli's attitude may be readily forgiven him ; but not his innuendo against the Lord Chancellor, to whom Disraeli, with general assent, has ascribed not only "political courage, versatile ability, and ripe scholarship," but also "tenderness of disposition and sweetness of temper" ; at once a man's man and a woman's. Let Greville go by with the comment of one who was shrewd without being shrill, a stoic but



not a cynic, the twelfth Duke of Somerset : "The impression produced by C. Greville's *Memoirs* is that he was a selfish man who never ascribed a good motive to any one."

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"I want to be Prime Minister."

This was the reply made in his early manhood, after his first defeat at Wycombe, to Lord Melbourne, who in a friendly way asked him what he wanted to be. The statesman's interest was a second-hand and perhaps a rather bored one. His dear friend Mrs. Norton had asked him to be of any use he could to the young aspirant, who here as elsewhere, and now as throughout life, saw the hand of a woman silently working the machine of State. The talk took place at Mrs. Norton's dinner-table ; and the Home Secretary—as Melbourne then was—must have been startled out of indifference by the soaring reply. The office was one within his own range of ambition—but this alien's ! Melbourne was soon, but not more surely than Disraeli later, to realise the dream. And he lived long enough to see Disraeli within reach of his goal ; but hardly to foresee that the young man who had gained Mrs. Norton's good-will would be the only Minister to win from Queen Victoria, towards the close of her reign, a warmer personal attachment than that she had accorded to him at its beginning.

*The Name Disraeli*

"Oh, knock out the apostrophe; it looks so foreign. Write my name in one word—Disraeli."

This was said by Disraeli, when he stood for Maidstone in 1837, to Mr. Edward Pickford Hall, the editor of a local paper, to whom the candidate dictated his first address.

"Mr. Disraeli—I hope I pronounce his name right," said the proposer of Colonel Perronet Thompson, a few days later, on the hustings at Maidstone.<sup>1</sup> "Colonel Perronet Thompson—I hope I pronounce his name aright," said Disraeli in his succeeding (in all ways succeeding) speech. Nor, for that matter, was the pronunciation of the name found in after years to be so fixed an affair: the Maidstone politician had perhaps more reason than he knew for his sally. The softened sound of Israel, incorporated into Disraeli, was heard—rarely; Disraeli was thumped forth rhyming, say, with the name of his one-time secretary, Daly. But many older-fashioned people made up for this quickening of sound by an undue elongation—Disra-ee-li; some of them unwittingly, some of them to underscore the alien. Speaker Peel, for instance, inherited the habit from his father; and, calling once on Mr. Coningsby Disra-ee-li, surprised Mr. Healy to his legs. The same sound and syllables must

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Perronet Thompson (who sat for Hull and Bradford) died a General, and eighty-six years of age, in 1869.

have been accorded by the writer of some doggerel, entitled "Mr. Gladstone's Soliloquy," published in a Yorkshire paper at the time of Lord Beaconsfield's death. One verse may be preserved, only in illustration :

Full long I sulk'd, then got to my axe,  
My trusty axe I took to wielding freely ;  
And ever as my victim bit the dust,  
I only wished that it were Disraeli.

The ambiguity had been felt from earliest years : at his first school, the wife of the master solved or evaded the difficulty by using "Is he really?" Apostrophe or no apostrophe, the name could not be other than alien to English ears ; and so long as he lived, Disraeli cannot be said to have been entirely forgiven for it. The apostrophe was finally dropped by Benjamin in writing his father's name. It stands as Disraeli, not as D'Israeli, on the title-page of his edition of his father's works. The rule of uniformity thus established has been observed in these pages.



#### *At Westminster*

To a friend who, walking with him from the Carlton to the House of Commons, turned to descend the Duke of York's steps, Disraeli is reported to have said :

"No, no, not that way ; it's so d——d dull."

But who was the "friend"? The path of greater publicity is, on occasion, preferred for the hindrance it places in the way of tiresome talk. Dull walking and dull talking together tire beyond bearing—as children, sent out with preoccupied hirelings, early begin to know. Obviously, if Disraeli wished to avoid that dreary solitude of two, the road, not the companion, had, for politeness of speech, to bear the brunt and be d——d. When he walked alone, the Park route was the one most commonly taken.

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Disraeli must have found the walk "that way" from the House to Pall Mall anything but "dull"—very lively indeed, after the opening of her first Parliament by Queen Victoria.

"From the Lords I escaped with Mahon," wrote Disraeli, "almost at the hazard of our lives, and we at length succeeded in gaining the Carlton, having several times been obliged to call on the police and the military to protect us as we attempted to break the line."

When they reached the club, their hats were crushed, they were covered with mud, and in their ears echoed the ready epithet hurled at Disraeli by the jocular crowd, "Jim Crow": a palpable enough hit, we may suppose, to secure the repeating of it to Lady Mahon, whose praises of the sonnet Disraeli

addressed to her had not at the moment exhilarated her husband. Disraeli, let it be added, had a true affection for Lord Mahon, better known as Lord Stanhope, the biographer of Pitt ; and his portrait was among those hung and prized to the very last at Hughenden.

Dizzy, famous for his foppery, was nevertheless nearly kept away from the coronation of his Queen Victoria because he did not happen to possess the garb to go in. Only a few days before the crowning, he wrote in a private letter :

“I must give up going to the Coronation, as we [Members of Parliament] go in state, and all must be in Court dresses or uniforms. As I have withstood making a costume of this kind for other purposes, I will not make one now.”

With that deprivation in view the young member for Maidstone had recourse to philosophy—the wise cheat.

“I console myself,” he says, “with the conviction that to get up very early (eight o'clock), to sit dressed like a flunkey in the Abbey for seven or eight hours, and to listen to a sermon by the Bishop of London, can be no great enjoyment.”

Dizzy, indeed, got up much earlier than eight that Coronation morning. At half-past two he got a Court suit, and at once proceeded to try it on.



THE AUTHOR OF *PIVIAN GRYP*.  
By Daniel Maclise R.A.

[To face p. 38.]



His sudden change of plan was due to the friendly persuasions (and the friendly purse) of his brother Ralph. Once he had his Court dress, Dizzy did not recur to its likeness to the livery of a flunkey. On the contrary, it not only got him into the Abbey, but it gave him otherwise a specially personal gratification :

“It turned out that I have a very fine leg, which I never knew before.”

He finds that, like Sir Willoughby Patterne, “he has a leg.”



### *The Maiden Speech*

#### “Failure !”

An overpowering, and therefore a single, emotion sometimes finds fittest expression in a single word ; and “Failure !” was Disraeli's after the famous break-down of his maiden speech. Hardly a break-down, however. Disraeli did not falter ; others failed to listen. As we look at it now, the failure was not his, but theirs.

None the less did its influence on Disraeli's career appear, for the moment of chagrin, to be disastrous. The new member was not as other new members. He was already a figure ; he had written successful books of a youthful smartness that staid people always believe to be most justly castigated ; he was a



fop, with a drawing-room reputation, and if he was this and no more—(they saw before them the alien figure, flashy in its accoutrements according to their taste, but they could not measure his mind or judge his strength of purpose)—then most righteously was he humbled. Moreover, he came to Westminster with malice prepense, as it were; not impartially waiting for the opportunities that might there offer themselves, but hot for the combat to which he had challenged O'Connell. It would seem, indeed, all things considered, that he courted opposition when, following O'Connell, he rose for the first time to take his part in debate. Before him, on the Treasury Bench, where he would one day sit supreme, he saw Lord John Russell, to whose leadership of the Whigs he had pointed in modern illustration of the ancient worship of an insect. Lord Palmerston, too, must have smiled at, and not on, the young member with so little of the Briton about him, who had written of Palmerston himself as the Lord Fanny of Foreign Politics. Joseph Hume—ready at any time to

Take the sense  
Of the House on a saving of thirteen pence,

had been probed by Disraeli's pen; and such personal friends as Bulwer and Duncombe were ranged among his political foes. Mr. O'Connor, *facile princeps* in a House of Commons sketch, reminds us that

Graham and Macaulay were both out of the House on this memorable evening. Of these and their compeers he had said to his sister that he could "floor them all"; and now was the moment when he must make good his word. He had to keep faith with believing Bradenham. That was the most anxious work of all—to justify himself, and what his career had cost, in the sight of his family. And if, by all his dignities, he had to show the Reformers, who had sought him, that it would have been worth their while to win him, he had also—a nervous achievement for a nervous man—to honour the large drafts of confidence he had drawn upon his Tory friends. Chandos was there, his neighbour from County Bucks, the son of that Marquis of Carabas he had sketched in *Vivian Grey*, and his backer at the Carlton—the "friend of Chandos," Lyndhurst had said of him to Greville, when a seat had to be obtained quickly lest Lord Durham should step in first.

All these things, and more than these, were acutely present to Disraeli when he rose to take part in an Irish debate so fiercely conducted that the Speaker had already once threatened to leave the Chair. And now, before the cheers of the members for Ireland and other friends had subsided with O'Connell's lofty figure, the oration on which so much seemed then to depend had begun. The conduct of Sir Francis Burdett in subscribing to the Spottiswoode Fund for

aiding Protestant candidates in Ireland in petitioning against any Catholic ones who might be elected was the subject of a motion by Mr. Smith O'Brien ; and Disraeli, as we know, was allied with Burdett (even before Burdett sat on the Tory side) as an antagonist of O'Connell. The speaker's allusion to the " magnificent mendicancy " of the Liberator invited the volleys that poured forth continuously from the Irish Brigade. They, who were many, matched their voices against his, which was single ; and such a contest could have but one ending. Victory lay with the strong lungs of the Hibernians ; and considering what the brute forces still are to which a nominally Christian civilisation makes appeal, one really cannot be squeamish with these Irishmen about their defensive weapons.

"Honourable members . . ." he said, at the close of a constantly interrupted speech, which nevertheless fills five and a half columns of *Hansard*. "I will submit. I would not act so towards any one—that is all I can say. Nothing is so easy as to laugh. I really wish to place before the House our position. When we remember that in spite of the support of the honourable and learned member for Dublin and his well-disciplined phalanx of patriots, and remember the amatory eclogue, the old loves and the new, that took place between the noble lord, the Tityrus of the Treasury Bench, and the learned Daphne of Liskeard, which appeared

as a fresh instance of the *amoris redintegratio*; when we remember that the noble lord, secure on the pedestal of power, may wield in the one hand the keys of Peter and—no, Mr. Speaker, we see the philosophical prejudices of man. I am not at all surprised, sir, at the reception I have received. I have begun several times many things, and I have always succeeded at last. Aye, sir, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me.”

A correspondent of the *Times*, “H. B. L.,” writing at the time of Disraeli’s death, says of this *début* in the House of Commons :

“The validity of O’Connell’s election for Dublin having been contested, a subscription was set on foot for the purpose of defraying the expenses of getting him ousted. To this Sir Francis Burdett, recently converted to somewhat Conservative views, had largely contributed. It was proposed to place his name on the election committee; but O’Connell, having fairly enough demurred to the justice of a declared partisan being nominated to such an office, made a vigorous attack on him, and in the course of his speech gave him to understand that he considered him the ‘greatest renegade in the house.’ To this Sir Francis made answer that he could see no reason why, in the case of attempt being made to bring to justice some ‘notorious offender,’ a magistrate who

might be called on to assist in carrying out the law should be disqualified on account of any pecuniary aid he may have furnished for the purpose of forwarding so desirable an end. I need not say that the contest between these two Parliamentary combatants, each in a different way so cunning of fence, was a sight worth seeing. The speech which Mr. Disraeli rose to deliver on that occasion was, of course, elaborately prepared, perhaps too much so. I recollect it as containing, here and there, passages which could hardly fail to provoke a smile should the slightest nervousness arrest the power of unimpeded delivery. O'Connell evidently saw this. In an unlucky moment the speaker said something intimating that he (O'Connell) was a skulker, and afraid to look his antagonist in the face, or words to that effect, when up got the burly Liberator on his legs, and, advancing from his seat, stood bolt upright, looking hard at his opponent, with one hand in the breast of his waistcoat, his broad chest ostentatiously expanded, and his shrewd grey eyes gleaming with a sort of mirthful defiance. This completed in a short time the discomfiture which the speaker's nervousness was already bringing on him, and he soon sat down, looking very pale, after having given utterance to the words so well known and so often referred to and quoted. By-the-bye, I think, but will not confidently aver, that the sentence in question was spoken thus,—‘The time

will come when you shall hear me,' the word 'shall' being emphasised in a tone somewhat bordering on menace."

That was a bold front. Brave men do not surrender needlessly; some brave men surrender never. "Now, if any one accuses me," cried Ottilia to Prince Otto, "I get up and give it them. Oh, I defend myself. I wouldn't take a fault at another person's hands, no, not if I had it on my forehead." But in private, and we are still in private among attached friends, it is otherwise. Face to face with misfortune, the spirit flags; the unlistened-to orator, in the Division Lobby, murmured that word "Failure!" to Chandos, who came up to him with congratulations. "No such thing," replied the backer, from whom such comfort came with official as well as friendly force. "You are quite wrong. I have just seen Peel, and I said to him: 'Tell me exactly what you think of Disraeli.' Peel replied: 'Some of the party were disappointed and talk of failure. I say *just the reverse*. He did all that he could under the circumstances. I say anything but failure. He must make his way.'"

A very different Parliament-man had formed the same opinion. This was Sheil, whom Bulwer found at the Athenæum in the midst of—the words are Disraeli's—"a set of low Rads (we might guess them), abusing me and exulting in the discrimination of the House. Bulwer drew near, but stood apart. Suddenly

Sheil threw down the paper, and said in his shrill voice : ' Now, gentlemen, I have heard all you have to say, and what is more, I heard this same speech of Mr. Disraeli ; and I tell you this, that if ever the spirit of oratory was in a man, it is in that man ; nothing can prevent him from being one of the first speakers in the House of Commons.' (Great confusion.) ' Ay ! and I know something about that place, I think ; and I tell you what besides, that if there had not been this interruption, Mr. Disraeli might have made a failure. I don't call this a failure, it is a crush. My *début* was a failure, because I was heard ; but my reception was supercilious, his malignant. A *début* should be dull. The House will not allow a man to be a wit and an orator unless they have the credit of finding it out. There it is.' "

At Bulwer's dinner-table a few days later, Sheil further unburdened himself to Disraeli, whom he met then for the first time :

" If you had been listened to, what would have been the result ? You would have made the best speech that you ever would have made. It would have been received frigidly, and you would have despaired of yourself. I did. As it is, you have shown to the House that you have a fine organ, that you have an unlimited command of language, that you have courage, temper, and readiness. Now get rid of your genius for a session. Speak often, for you must not show

yourself cowed, but speak shortly. Be very quiet, try to be dull, only argue, and reason imperfectly, for if you reason with precision, they will think you are trying to be witty. Astonish them by speaking on subjects of detail. Quote figures, dates, calculations, and in a short time the House will sigh for the wit and eloquence which they all know are in you ; they will encourage you to pour them forth, and then you will have the ear of the House and be a favourite."

Greatly comforted as he was by the report of Chandos, and already beginning to see that this catastrophe was of those which soften foes, waken sympathy in the indifferent, and conciliate rivals, Disraeli's thoughts now went to Hughenden, whither the papers would carry the news of his discomfiture. A few hours later found him writing to his sister, under date of December 8th, 1837 :

"I made my maiden speech last night, rising very late after O'Connell, but at the request of my party, and with the full sanction of Sir Robert Peel. As I wish to give you an exact idea of what occurred, I state at once that my *début* was a failure, so far that I could not succeed in gaining an opportunity of saying what I intended ; but the failure was not occasioned by my breaking down or any incompetency on my part, but from the physical powers of my adversaries. I can give you no idea how bitter, how factious, how unfair



they were. It was like my first *debut* at Aylesbury, and perhaps in that sense may be auspicious of ultimate triumph in the same scene. I fought through all with undaunted pluck and unruffled temper, made occasionally good isolated hits when there was silence, and finished with spirit when I found a formal display was effectual. My party backed me well, and no one with more zeal and kindness than Peel, cheering me repeatedly, which is not his custom. The uproar was all organised by the Rads and the Repealers. They formed a compact body near the Bar of the House and seemed determined to set me down, but that they did not do. I have given you a most impartial account, stated indeed against myself."

Then he tells the story of Chandos, certain to soothe, and he ends the letter "Yours, D., in very good spirits." The *Times* helped by referring to "Mr. Disraeli's eloquent speech," and if against this was to be set the *Globe's* "one of the most lamentable failures of late years," the *Globe* was an ancient enemy that had not forgotten its quarrel; while the *Morning Chronicle's* allusion to "a maiden but not very modest speech, which even his nearest friends will tell him was a ridiculous failure," lost half its sting in losing all its truth. Disraeli's own political account of the fiasco is only second in interest to his personal and domestic account of it, and this, by

good luck, we get from a speech he made a week afterwards at a dinner given him by his supporters in Maidstone :

“The circumstances in which I addressed the Speaker were altogether unparalleled. I doubt if anything at all similar to them had ever before occurred. This fault only I find with myself. I was warned of the reception I should meet with, but this only induced me to meet it the sooner. It is part of my constitution to meet menacing danger as soon as possible. (Cheers.) I have no idea of shirking a conflict which I know to be inevitable. Yet I had some confidence in the honour of gentlemen. I did not think the moment a new member rose there would be an organised conspiracy to put him down by clamour. I have stood as often as most men of my age before assemblies of the people—adverse assemblies, unwilling audiences—but I always found that which is the boast of Britons—fair play. (Cheers.) I ever found that they recognised the justice of our national adage that ‘fair play is a jewel,’ and least of all did I expect that it would be denied by the gentlemen of England. But why do I style them ‘gentlemen’ of England? Oh, no : it was not by them that fair play was denied ; for in an assembly crowded almost beyond parallel, in which nearly six hundred members were present, rising at midnight to address the House, I declare on the honour of a gentleman that a small band of

thirty or forty produced all the uproar you have heard of. My voice had not been raised before the insulting jeer arose and the affected derision was expressed by which they hoped to send me into my seat. But I tell you candidly my thoughts instantly reverted to you, my constituents. (Cheers.) Is this, I said to myself, the return for your generous confidence, that the moment I rise an infuriated, Jacobinical, and Papistical mob should raise their blatant voices? Shall I yield to them like a child or a poltroon, and resume my seat with pale face and chattering teeth? (Immense cheering.) No such thing, gentlemen. I determined to be on my legs exactly the period I intended my speech should occupy. I succeeded sometimes in comparative calm; sometimes the cheering of friends joining with the yelling of the foe; sometimes in a scene of tumult unspeakable. But I stood erect, and when I sat down I sent them my defiance. They thought to put me down, but they never shall put me down. (Immense cheering.) Yet, gentlemen, I would not have you suppose for a moment, when I speak thus, that I am deficient in respect for the House. No one feels more deeply than myself what is due to the House of Commons; no one will bend more readily to its opinion or the decision of the Speaker; no one will respect more than myself the wish of its smallest section. I would respect it because I feel the feelings of an individual ought not to be placed in competition with the public time and the public interests. But

there are certain emergencies in which it becomes necessary to show that a man will not be crushed ; and I felt that the circumstances under which so unmanly an attack was made upon me justified me in retaining my position for upwards of twenty minutes, not, I have reason to know, in opposition to the opinion of the Speaker—not, I have reason to know, in opposition to the feeling of the leading men of all parties. Therefore I could not justify myself in sitting down and acknowledging myself overawed by a small and contemptible mob. (Cheers.) For the House of Commons collectively I entertain unbounded respect, and I would bow submissively to the *dictum* of the Speaker or the vote of any considerable number of its members ; but can I conceal from myself, can any practical man conceal from himself, that there are many members in that House who are beneath contempt ; and, because a small herd of members, whom individually and collectively I despise, congregate like skulking cowards in the remote corners of the House to assail me with disgraceful uproar, was it for your representative, gentlemen, to fall down before them like a craven slave ? (Cheers.) No, gentlemen ; I expressed what I thought. I told them ‘the time would come when they would be obliged to listen to me,’ and so long as I possess the confidence of my constituents, so long as I meet them with minds so firm and hearts so sound towards me, believe me, I will take care to reduce my promise to practice.

I will speak, and they shall hear me. (Cheers.) They may have prevented me from making a good speech, but they could not deter me from making a good fight; and I trust I have not disappointed you. (No, no.)"

Disraeli, in those early days, often loudly whistled to keep up his own courage. It is agreeable to close the record of that first speech with the reminiscence of one who listened from the opposite benches, and who was afterwards to be a Foreign Secretary dogging the steps of Lord Beaconsfield. The Mr. Leveson Gower of 1837 was the Lord Granville of 1881 when, looking back for more than forty years, he said in his panegyric—it can be called no less—of his dead opponent:

"That Lord Beaconsfield has played his part in English history, that he had rare and splendid gifts and great force of character, no one can deny. I doubt whether to many public men can the quality of genius be more fitly attributed. It was by his strong individuality, unaided by adventitious circumstances, that he owed his great personal success. Assisted by those social circumstances that Mr. Disraeli was without, I came into the House of Commons at an early age, and six months before he took his seat in that assembly. I thus heard him make that speech, famous for its failure, a speech which, I am convinced, had it been made when he was better known to the House

of Commons, would have been received with cheers and sympathy instead of with derisive laughter, but which, owing to the prejudices of his audience, he was obliged to close with a sentence which, like a somewhat similar ejaculation of Mr. Sheridan, showed the unconquerable confidence which strong men have in their own power."

Whether the speech was good or bad, mattered nothing then to those who scoffed; matters nothing now. The speaker preserved his individuality—even his idiosyncrasy. He did not change his tongue; the House attuned its ear. He had escaped the mould and thumb-screw of public school, the university iron-maiden. Less malleable now, he passed the ordeal of Parliamentary life—Disraeli still; unyielding to the Philistines.

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"But your friends will not allow me to finish my pictures."

This was Disraeli's natural parry to the question put to him by Sir John Campbell, the Liberal Attorney-General, who came up to him in the Lobby, as a stranger, yet cordially, asking: "Now, Mr. Disraeli, could you just tell me how you finished one sentence in your speech—we are anxious to know: 'In one hand the keys of St. Peter and in the other——'?" Disraeli good-naturedly completed the quotation—"in

the other the cap of Liberty." The Attorney-General, having to say something, said "a good picture," whereupon Disraeli made his plaint about the interference that prevented his completion of his picture. Then Sir John disowned the "party at the Bar, over whom we had no control," adding, "but you have nothing to be afraid of."

Nor had he. "Nothing daunted" (his own phrase), he rose ten days later and spoke on Talfourd's Copyright Bill, as he says, "with complete success." Following Peel, he was received "with the utmost curiosity and attention." A general cheer, in which Lord John Russell joined, greeted the peroration: "It has been the boast of the Whig party, and a boast not without foundation, that in many brilliant periods of our literary annals, they have been the patrons of letters. As for myself, I trust that the age of literary patronage has passed, and it will be honourable to the present Government if, under its auspices, it be succeeded by that of legislative protection." Talfourd said he would avail himself of an "excellent suggestion" made (at Colburn's instance) by "the honourable member for Maidstone, himself one of the greatest ornaments of our modern literature," and Peel cheered loudly at that. "Everybody congratulated me:" Colonel Lygon saying, "Well, you have got in your saddle again, and now you may ride away," and Grenville Somerset declaring,

"I never heard a few sentences so admirably delivered—you will allow me to say so, after having been twenty-five years in Parliament?" Even the meagre report in the papers did nothing to disturb the equanimity of the neophyte who feared not to foretell : "It is my firm opinion that the next time I rise in the House, I shall sit down amid loud cheers, for I really think, on the whole, that the effect of my *début*, and the circumstances that attended it, will ultimately be favourable to my career. The many articles that are daily written to announce my failure only prove that I have not failed."

Lastly, we bear in mind a verse which Randolph wrote to Ben Jonson when Ben's comedy *The New Inn* had been laughed off the stage. It was a verse already familiar to Victorian Ben ; and one fancies him saying it to himself, for comfort, as he sat dejectedly through the remainder of the debate that had brought him humiliation.

Ben, do not leave the stage,  
'Cause 'tis a loathsome age ;  
For pride and impudence will grow too bold  
When they shall hear it told  
They frighted thee. Stand high as is thy cause ;  
Their hiss is thy applause.  
More just were thy disdain  
Had they approved thy vein.  
So thou for them, and they for thee, were born—  
They to incense, and thou as much to scorn,



*Married Life*

"I have no doubt about it."

These were Disraeli's dry words spoken in the April of 1832, on first meeting the lively lady who, seven years later, became his wife; words expressing his acquiescence in her flattering preference for "silent melancholy men." "Gifted with a volubility which I should think unequalled and of which I can convey no idea," was, furthermore, Disraeli's first impression. The meeting took place at Bulwer's, and it was "by particular desire" that he was taken up to Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, a "pretty little woman, a flirt and a rattle" (he calls her), who became henceforth his frequent hostess and his fervent friend. No doubt it was through her good offices that he became her husband's colleague in the representation of Maidstone. Wyndham Lewis died in 1838, leaving his "dear wife" a life interest in all his property—the house at Grosvenor Gate and some £4000 a year. She was fifty, and Disraeli nearing thirty-five, when they were married in St. George's, Hanover Square, late in the August of 1839.

Of this lucky lady's birth and upbringing some mystery has been made where none was. She was the only daughter of John Evans (not, as usually given, "Viney Evans"), Lieutenant (not "Captain" nor yet "Commander") in the Royal



*Photo by J. P. Stirling, High Wycombe.*

MARY ANNE DISRAELI, VISCOUNTESS BRASENORDALE.

From the portrait at Hughenden Manor.

[To face p. 56.]



Navy. His parents were John Evans of Brampford Speke (not "Branceford Park"), an hour's walk out of Exeter, and Eleanor his wife, daughter of James Viney, Vicar of Bishopstrow, co. Wilts. The Vineys had been Lords of the Manor of Taynton; their tombs are to be seen in the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral; and their living name got a more than local fame with Mrs. Disraeli's uncle, General Sir James Viney, who left her a legacy of £2000 when he died in 1841. Her only brother, Lieutenant-Colonel John Viney Evans, died July 2nd, 1839, eight weeks before she changed her name again, this time from Lewis to Disraeli. The man who was so near to being—what William Meredith, too, had nearly been, but none ever was—Disraeli's brother-in-law, lies in desolate Kensal Green, where his tombstone, as itself avows, was "raised to his memory by his affectionate sister, Mary Anne Lewis." Mrs. Disraeli's father had then long been dead.

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"One word of which you are ignorant, gratitude."

This is Disraeli's reply, uniformly agreed upon in its terms, to a questioner (variously quoted and variously named) who spoke disrespectfully of Mrs. Disraeli to her husband.

Sir William Gregory assigns the *gaucherie* to George Smythe, others attribute it to Mr. Bernal

Osborne. Readers may decline on mere rumour to attribute to anybody a rudeness of the kind. But, for the present purpose, we take the story as Sir William Gregory tells it: "Disraeli looked him straight between the two eyes, and said: 'George, there is one word in the English language of which you are ignorant.' 'What is that?' asked Smythe, somewhat taken aback. 'Gratitude, George,' said Dizzy."

Of many other stories, told at Lady Beaconsfield's expense, one need not here make a collection. Some of her alleged sayings in country-houses are accepted as trustworthy because told on the authority of "a son of the house." Sons of the houses will be gratified by this universal faith in their veracity.

It is noteworthy that, while Lord Beaconsfield's friends have mostly been silent about him, those who are other than his friends have published volubly at his expense. Sir William Gregory does indeed call himself his "friend." Sir William did not belong to the party which Lord Beaconsfield educated; and yet Lord Beaconsfield gave him his heart's desire—the Governorship of Ceylon. With his summing-up of Disraeli the politician as a "charlatan" we do not need to deal. But in private life those two men took salt together. Sir William, who says that at one period there was hardly a week in which he did not dine with the Beaconsfields, thus describes his hostess;

"She was a most repulsive woman, flat, angular, underbred." Again, the guest takes us into a confidence: "It was ludicrous," says Sir William, "to see the tokens of affection and apparently of admiration which he lavished upon Mariannc, as we irreverently called her. One evening, on coming up from dinner, he knelt before her, and, as they say in novels, devoured both her hands with kisses, saying at the same time, in the most lackadaisical manner, 'Is there anything I can do for my dear little wife?'" At last Disraeli is some other than an onlooker; and in that scene the casual onlooker was evidently at a disadvantage: even Disraeli's love-making was distasteful to a third person. So much one adventures in apology for Sir William Gregory.

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"We have been married thirty years; and she has never given me a dull moment."

So said Disraeli to Lord Ronald Gower of the "perfect wife" as that perfect wifehood drew near its destined close. All stories told of Lady Beaconsfield agree in one particular—her devotion to her husband. A more useful daily quality than devotion even was her power to amuse him. That never failed. Once when Sir John Mowbray marvelled at Disraeli's hasty dinners and hard attendances at the House, and said he did not know how the Minister was kept going, Lady Beaconsfield replied: "Ah, but I always have supper

for him when he comes home, and lights, lights, plenty of lights—Dizzy always likes light. And then he tells me all that has happened in the House, and then I clap him off to bed."

Once, in her effort to amuse Disraeli, she made Sir William Harcourt blush. He was dining with the Disraelis and sat beside the hostess, who observed that he was looking at the picture of a lightly robed lady on the wall opposite, and said: "It oughtn't to be allowed in here; but it is nothing to the Venus that Dizzy has up in his bedroom." "That I can well believe," replied he, with a gallant bow. Of course the story had to be told to Dizzy, who always delighted in Harcourt's wit; and, all the company hearing it, *Harcourt perhaps had a bad half-minute. This was one of the rare occasions on which Disraeli smiled.*

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"Man is a predatory animal. The worthiest objects of his chase are women and power. After I married Mary Anne, I desisted from the one and devoted my life to the pursuit of the other."

This is one of the many sayings which are quoted to show that Disraeli was a cynic; but which, as we know from history, need mean no more than that it was a cynic to whom they were, partly in sympathy, partly in an understood jocosity, addressed.

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"She suffers so dreadfully at times."

This also to Lord Ronald Gower, who adds: "It was quite touching to see his distress. His face, generally so emotionless, was filled with a look of suffering and woe that nothing but the sorrow of her he so truly loved could cause on that impassive countenance." Dizzyites, who acknowledge their debt to Lord Ronald's pen and chisel, must marvel that one who received this close confidence could afterwards be jaunty at the expense of the dead woman whom Disraeli "*so truly loved*."

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To Lord Malmesbury, after the death of Lady Beaconsfield :

"I hope some of my friends will take notice of me now. I feel as if I had no home. When I tell my coachman to drive 'Home,' I feel it is a mockery."

This Disraeli said "with tears in his eyes," as Lord Malmesbury told the House of Lords on the occasion of the Address to Her Majesty praying for a memorial to the Favourite Minister in Westminster Abbey. The humble phrase "take notice of me now" possibly covered a refusal to go to Heron's Court, where, more than once, Disraeli had been the guest of Lord Malmesbury. Sincere as well as profuse hospitality had been extended to him in the past; and his refusals were far more frequent than



his acceptances. Great houses, in town and country, from his early manhood had opened their doors to one who had made himself indispensable where he had not made himself loved. The Duchess of Rutland (who modestly omits from her list Belvoir itself) writes : "The halls of Mentmore, the sweet shades of Cliveden, the libraries of Knowsley, the galleries of Blenheim ; Bretby, with all its associations of wit ; Hatfield, combining the charms of past and present ; Weston, with its glorious oaks ; Knole, with its antique chambers, its eighty staircases ; and Trentham, with its terraced gardens, among other places, were all homes where he was eagerly welcomed."

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Disraeli's own tributes to "the severest of critics but a perfect wife," to one whose "taste and judgment" (we are glad to set this testimony against a ream of anecdotage) "ever guided" the pages of *Sybil* ; his avowal in Edinburgh : "I do owe to that lady all I think I have ever accomplished, because she has supported me by her counsels and consoled me by the sweetness of her disposition ;"—these are the records that will endure.

To these may be given a postscript worthy of its place of honour—the tribute paid by a familiar friend to Lady Beaconsfield in the *Times* the day after her death in December, 1872 :

"Thus closes, in the fulness of years, a life which

has exerted no inconsiderable influence on English politics. She stands out a striking illustration of the power the most unobtrusive of women may exercise, while keeping herself strictly to a woman's sphere. Looking back on the long and tender relationship which has been dissolved in the course of nature, we are irresistibly reminded of the feelings expressed by Mahomed when the Prophet of the Faithful lost the loving woman he had married in the days of comparative obscurity. 'By God,' he exclaimed in an outburst of regretful gratitude, as he raised her solemnly to the rank of the four perfect women—'by God there never was a better wife. She believed in me when men despised me. She relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world.' It was deep-seated, kindly sentiment of the sort which made Mr. Disraeli the devoted husband Lady Beaconsfield found him, and once he vented it with equally honest vehemence in reproof of an indiscreet acquaintance who ventured indelicately on personal ground. His wife had come to his help when life had threatened to be too short to assure him the prospect he had dreamt of. At length he had taken his seat in Parliament. He came to it conscious of the possession of no ordinary political talents, and of the rarer gifts which should make a great party leader. He had always believed in himself and had never scrupled to proclaim his faith ostentatiously. He knew himself

to combine originality and versatility with absolute independence of thought and a contemptuous indifference to party tradition. He had cast in his lot with the Conservatives, and those were the very qualities to enable a man to rally a beaten party upon new ground, and to fight a losing battle in face of the inevitable Liberal advance. But time was everything to him, and the precious time was slipping away fast. As yet he sat almost alone; he had few friends and no intimates. Ancient as it was, his birth was against him—the country gentlemen would have been slow to admit to companionship a lineal descendant even of the Maccabees,—so were his dress and demeanour, the style of his speech, and even his somewhat eccentric literary reputation. More than that, he had already failed in the House, to the disappointment of the political chief who had expected great things of him. He felt, in fact, that he was regarded askance as an unsuccessful adventurer. Had the leaders of his party been in the secret of his aspirations, they would have scoffed at them as the insane visions of an enthusiast. Believing in himself more firmly than ever, his strong common sense could only tend to discourage him on a nearer view of the difficulties before him. With time and patience he might win, no doubt; but who could say the time would be given him? Life is precarious, anxiety and disappointment tell terribly on a sanguine and ardent

nature. A little of the material prosperity that seemed the common lot of the luckier men around him would make all the difference ; for England then, more than now, insisted on a high property qualification as a material guarantee for the virtue of her statesmen. When he might well have despaired had his nature been a despondent one, a fortunate marriage smoothed the path of his ambition.

"It is no fault of ours if we have to write rather of the husband than the wife. From their wedding-day till now the existence of the one was merged in that of the other. It was their mutual happiness that the wife lived only in the husband ; the husband's extraordinary career was the happy achievement of her life, and it was her pride to shine in the reflection of his fame. . . .

"Mrs. Disraeli was many years<sup>1</sup> her second husband's senior (when she died she had reached the venerable age of eighty-three) ; on the other hand she had the money he desired for something better than sordid motives. But Mr. Disraeli was too shrewd a man to pay for name and power at the price of happiness. It is certain he chose wisely every way, and seldom has a marriage proved more of a love match than his. We are glad to believe that the romance of real life often begins at the point where it invariably ends in fiction. . . . How many husbands,

<sup>1</sup> In plain figures, 15—she fifty, he thirty-five, when they married.

far less engrossed abroad, have considered a tithe of the fame he won sufficient acquittal of so old a debt ! How many content themselves with leaving their wives to enjoy prosperity in isolation ! Mr. Disraeli did no such thing, although for that he would claim but little credit. The fact is his wife made his home a very happy one, and he turned to its peacefulness with intense relief in the midst of fierce political turmoil. We are apt to forget that most men lead a double life ; that those of the strongest natures and the sharpest individuality show themselves in the most marked contrasts. It was a pretty sight, that of the remorseless Parliamentary gladiator, who neither gave quarter nor asked it, who fought with venomous weapons although he struck fair, and shot barbed darts which clung and rankled in the wounds—it was a pretty sight to see him in the soft sunshine of domestic life, anticipating the wishes of his wife with feminine tenderness of consideration, and receiving her ministering with the evident enjoyment which is the most delicate flattery of all. The secret of the spell she held him by was a simple one. She loved him with her whole heart and soul, she believed in him above all men, and he appreciated at its real worth that single-minded, self-sacrificing devotion. It is difficult to overrate the strength and support given by unstinted love like that, and few, we suspect, appreciate it more than those who would seem to need it least. It is neither counsel nor



MARY ANNE DISRAELI, VISCOUNTESS BEACONSFIELD

From the portrait by A. F. Chalon, R.A., 1840

*Ulo fac p 66*



sparkle, but observant, ready sympathy that a man of energy and self-reliance longs for in moments of exhaustion and depression, and the more impassible the mask he wears the greater the relief of being able to drop it in private. Lady Beaconsfield was very far from being a reserved woman. She must have often talked too fast and freely for her husband's liking ; occasionally the expressions of her artless admiration for him were caught up and coloured, to be circulated as 'good stories' at dinner-tables ; but the intuitive instinct of her affection set a seal on her lips in the minutest matters where her talk might do him an injury. She was very much in his confidence, and she was never known to betray it. Except for the subtle influences of the home she made him, the help she brought was passive rather than active from first to last. All he had asked was fair play for his talents at the start ; her fortune had given him that, and he did the rest himself.

"So, in after-years, while he led his party in the Lower House or served the State as Premier of England, she had neither social talents nor fascination to place at his disposal. It was not in her to make his *salons* a centre of society, to gather within the range of his influence eminent Englishmen and influential foreigners, or to sway by the reputation of brilliant *réunions* the easy opinions of liberal-minded politicians. She was no Lady Palmerston to act as



her husband's most trusted ally, working for him in season and out of season with tact quickened by love. Her death will leave no gap behind her which bereaved society will find it hard to fill. But perhaps her husband will lose the more that society will lose the less. Her love for him was wonderful, 'passing the love of women.' It was shown in traits of unobtrusive heroism worthy of the matrons of Republican Rome. Few men can boast the courageous self-command which made her conceal, during a long drive to Westminster, the pain of a finger crushed in the carriage-door, lest she should agitate her husband on the eve of a great party debate. She knew a word could always bring her the sympathy. It was her sweetest consolation, but to the last her one thought was to spare him. Surprised by a sudden flow of blood from an incurable cancer, knowing that her doom was certain, and that their happy wedded life was fast drawing to its end, she had the touching resolution to preserve her secret; while, all the time knowing it as well as she, he never for a moment suffered her to guess his knowledge or gave her the grief of seeing him suffer. It was the graceful symbol of the chivalrous devotion which had never wavered; it was an appropriate return for the inestimable services she had done him when, in November, 1868, he could offer her the peerage bestowed in acknowledgment of a distinguished career. The loss of his

companion has snapped the tender associations of a lifetime, and must have left a blank which nothing can entirely fill. The sympathy of the public can count for little when he misses that he has so long been used to. Yet to a veteran in public life there must be comfort in the thought that the public you have served is feeling with you ; that England, irrespective of party, deploras even the timely termination of an essentially English union."



*Talk with Thomas Cooper, Chartist*

"I wish I had seen you before I finished my last novel : my heroine, Sybil, is a Chartist."

So said Disraeli to Thomas Cooper, Chartist. To know all the misery of the poor—and Disraeli had the energy to examine and the imagination to realise it—is surely to forgive their rebellion against the existing order—or disorder—of things ; and Disraeli not only visited the scene of Chartist riots as a novelist note-taker, but proclaimed as a politician the gospel of amnesty when the case of the "rebel printers," Lovett and Collins, came before the House of Commons ; and again declared himself, in the debate on a want of confidence in the Melbourne Administration in 1840 :

"I am not ashamed to say that I wish more

sympathy had been shown on both sides towards the Chartists."<sup>1</sup>

Later occurred this episode with Thomas Cooper, who had finished his *Purgatory of Suicides* in Stafford Jail, and came thence with his MS. (and his own attenuated frame) in the May of 1845. On reaching London, he called upon that excellent Tory-bred Radical, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, in the Albany, Piccadilly, and was there received with kindness. In the course of their talk, the "Prison Rhyme" was referred to, and the poet asked Tommy Duncombe for an introduction to a publisher. "A publisher!—why, I have never published anything in my life. I know nothing of publishers, but I will write a note to Disraeli for you." The note ran :

"MY DEAR DISRAELI,—I send you Mr. Cooper, a Chartist red-hot from Stafford Jail. But don't be frightened; he won't bite you. He has written a poem and a romance; and thinks he can cut out *Coningsby* and *Sybil*. Help him if you can, and oblige, yours,  
T. S. DUNCOMBE."

<sup>1</sup> This was that famous speech in which Disraeli twitted Lord John Russell, the Home Secretary, as one who could encourage sedition with one hand and shoot down the seditious with the other. "The Chartists would discover that in a country so aristocratic as England even treason, to be successful, must be patrician. Where Wat Tyler failed, Henry Bolingbroke changed a dynasty, and although Jack Straw was hanged a *Lord John* Straw might become a Secretary of State."



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GROSVENOR GATE (29, PARK LANE).

Disraeli's town residence, 1839-1872.

[To face p. 70]



Cooper read doubtfully, and turning to Duncombe, said : " You would not have me take a note like that ? " " Wouldn't I ? " he answered ; " but I would ; it is just the thing for you ; get off and present it at once." The Chartist took his way to Grosvenor Gate, and found Disraeli in his study. Gratefully he tells the story :

" One sees paragraphs very often now in the papers about the expressionless and jaded look of the Conservative leader's face, as Mr. Disraeli sits in the House of Commons. Yet as I then looked upon that face, I thought it one of great intellectual beauty. The eyes seemed living lights ; and the intelligent yet kindly way in which Mr. Disraeli inquired about the term of my imprisonment and treatment in prison convinced me that I was in the presence of a very shrewd as well as highly cultivated and refined man."

Disraeli, after expressing the wish already quoted, gave Cooper an introduction to Moxon. But Moxon declined to publish *The Purgatory of Suicides*, " by Thomas Cooper, Chartist," on the ground that there was no chance of its selling. Cooper, writing this to Disraeli, received by the next post a note to Colburn, Disraeli's own publisher. From him also came a refusal. " I ventured," says Cooper, " to call upon Mr. Disraeli the second time. He seemed really concerned at what I told him ; and when I asked him to give me a note to Messrs. Chapman & Hall, he

looked thoughtful, and said: 'No; I know nothing of them personally, and I should not like to write to them. But I will give you a note to Ainsworth, and desire him to recommend you to Chapman & Hall.'"<sup>1</sup>

Cooper took the note to Ainsworth, who, knowing that Chapman & Hall consulted John Forster as their reader, sent Cooper on to him. "Forster looked at the poem, and said: 'I suppose you have no objection to alter the title you give yourself. I certainly advise you to strike the *Chartist* out?' 'Nay, sir,' I replied; 'I shall not strike it out. Mr. Disraeli advised me not to let any one persuade

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli had relations with many publishers; and, characteristically, he has not an ill-natured word for one among them: almost the only author of his time who did not visit his own incompetence or the indifference of the public upon the luckless agent. Indeed, Disraeli himself, according to one rumour, early wished to join the trade, as partner to Moxon. Besides Moxon's and Colburn's, the following are names that appear on his title-pages: John Murray; William Marsh; Saunders & Otley ("If you are Otley, d— Saunders—if you are Saunders, d— Otley," Bulwer, at his wittiest, had said when he went with a grievance to Conduit Street, addressing the first representative of the firm he found there); John Macrone; John Ollivier; Bernhard Tauchnitz; W. E. Painter; J. J. Griffin; David Bryce; G. Routledge and Routledge, Warnes & Routledge; Robert Hardwicke; Rivingtons; Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, and the same firm under subsequent simpler guises; William Blackwood & Sons; John Camden Hotten; and Frederick Warne & Co. To Albemarle Street, which issued his first book, went fitly for posthumous publication Disraeli's *Home Letters* and his *Correspondence with his Sister*. The reigning John Murray of the 'twenties he counted among the first of his discoverers, allies, and friends; and to the John Murray of to-day the Disraeli biographer is under many and deep obligations.

me to strike it out; and I mean to abide by his advice.'” This episode—a very typical one—gained a too exceptional turn from Mr. Gladstone when he moved in the House of Commons the erection of a monument to his dead adversary in Westminster Abbey :

“It is only within the last few days that I have read in a very interesting book, *The Autobiography of Thomas Cooper*, how in the year 1844, when his influence with his party was not yet established, Mr. Cooper came to him in the character of a struggling literary man, who was also a Chartist, and the then Mr. Disraeli met him with the most active and cordial kindness—so ready was his sympathy for genius.”

The illustrations of that ingrained and cultivated quality of Disraeli's (“I who admire genius,” was a phrase familiar on his lips, and both his official and his private life repeatedly transformed the word into the deed) are so plentiful and conspicuous that one may be pardoned for feeling a little sense of the ludicrous in presence of the solitary instance cited by Mr. Gladstone.



### *The “Splendid Failure”*

“Oh, my lord, you always say agreeable things.”

So far back as the October of 1836, Lord Strangford (the translator of Camoens and the father of George



Smythe), returning to town from Strathfieldsaye, reported of an anti-O'Connell address Disraeli had just delivered to his future friends, the farmers of Bucks: "You have no idea of the sensation your speech has produced at Strathfieldsaye." Disraeli made his deprecation: "Oh, my Lord, you always say agreeable things." Whereupon Lord Strangford took aside the young speaker (not yet a member) and said: "I give you my honour as a gentleman that the Duke said at the dinner-table, 'It was the most manly thing yet done: when will he come into Parliament?'" As Radical Bulwer had been Disraeli's political godfather, it is interesting to note that he, too, thought the new Nationalist's speech, which even Tory leaders applauded, "the finest in the world."

Disraeli first met Percy, sixth Lord Strangford, in 1832, and after a dinner given by Lord Eliot (afterwards Earl of St. Germans), described him as "an aristocratic Tom Moore," whose talk was incessant and brilliant—a comparison that had been made already with a less friendly touch:

Let Moore still sing, let Strangford steal from Moore,  
And swear that Camoens sang such songs of yore.

So sang, if that is the word, the author of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*; and again he enjoins "Hibernian Strangford with thine eyes of blue"

Cease to deceive, thy pilfered harp restore,  
Nor teach the Lusian bard to copy Moore.

Strangford got the Legation at Lisbon very much in consequence of his fame as a Portuguese translator ; and Moore can have borne him no grudge ; for when a translation of another kind was in his view—that was the night before he was to “meet” Jeffrey to avenge a notice in the *Quarterly*—he wrote to Strangford : “My dear friend, if they want a biographer when I am gone, I think in your hands I should meet with most kind embalmment, so pray say something for me and remember me as one who has felt your good and social qualities”—those very qualities which Disraeli thought resembled Moore’s own. The combatants were arrested on the field, with their pistols, by the thoughtfulness of the seconds, unloaded.

As a letter-writer, Lord Strangford’s powers are attested by the replies he drew from all sorts and conditions of men—letters edited with tactful daring by Mr. Edward Barrington de Fonblanque, a son of Disraeli’s old friend, Albany. To his heir, George, Lord Strangford bequeathed the sounding title (a tin kettle tied to him, the last lord called it), the brilliant tongue, the ready pen ; a powerful combination, yet powerless to bring him to either the happiness or the fame that his rich nature craved and his talents promised. In the sum of man’s misery the disillusion of parents must largely bulk, a sorrow that must go mostly unspoken ; and the relations between this father and son are saved from ranking as unmitigated

tragedy only by Disraeli's appearance in the midst of them.

When Disraeli said to "Hibernian" Strangford, "Oh, my lord, you always say agreeable things," he seems almost to imply a doubt of the agreeable man's sincerity : it is our melancholy manner in a world wherein we look on our fellows as enemies until they have proved themselves to be our friends. Whether Disraeli was instinctively led to hold Lord Strangford guilty until he proved his innocence, one does not know ; but this was that Lord Strangford who, as the father of George Smythe, was thus addressed, eight years later, by the father of Lord John Manners :

"I lament as much as you do the influence which Mr. Disraeli has acquired over several of the young British senators " (which, by the way, he would hardly have called them had Disraeli not taught the world the phrase), "and over your son and mine especially. I do not know Mr. Disraeli by sight, but I have respect only for his talents, which I think he sadly misuses."

Again : "It is grievous," writes the Duke of Rutland to a confederate thinker, "that two young men such as John and Mr. Smythe should be led by one of whose integrity of purpose I have an opinion similar to your own, though I can judge only by his public career. The admirable character of our sons only makes them the more available by the arts of a designing

person." Young England was under the suspicion of the old Tory. The Radical hoof was recognised whenever Disraeli kicked up his heels, as, for instance, at the Manchester Athenæum. Lord Strangford, able to report to King Ernest of Hanover that he had placed the ban on George's Disraelitish doings, received royal congratulations. The King wrote: "Rejoiced am I indeed, not only for your sake, but for the sake of George Smythe himself, that his good sense has led him to abandon what is termed 'Young England.' I always felt sure that a young man of such rising abilities would soon wake out of his dreams and see the folly of being led by doctrinaire's rubbish and young men who, self-conceited, think that they, by inspiration, know more than their fathers, who have been experienced long ere they"—he means the sons—"were begotten." The King's joy was not destined to endure; for though George Smythe had promised to talk no fancy politics at Manchester, he talked nonsense of another sort, if we take the opinion of King Ernest, who "cannot understand what is meant by attempting to turn mechanics into poets and philosophers," and who disapproves of institutes likely "to make the lower orders too big for their boots"—boots at least are allowed them in an allegory.

Of this "splendid failure," as his kinsman, Lord Lyttelton, called him, we have a sort of synoptical

confession, more erratic but not less candid than any confession of St. Augustine's, in his own letters to his father. His father had been lax and severe with him in turn ; and a paternal hobby, the repurchase of some of the family estate in Kent, left the schoolboy George almost a beggar, to-day for a sovereign, to-morrow for some of his father's old clothes.<sup>1</sup> A mercenary marriage was part of the scheme of life which Lord Strangford had devised for the son ; and the son stumbled, instead, into love affairs which left him bankrupt in all credit. George was very tall, very strong, very handsome, very talented ; and when he left Eton to read with Julius Hare, his father saw what he had made, and said that it was good. "No one has a finer spirit or a better heart than George." But within a year that same pen sets down : "He wants application, ambition and all those natural affections through which youth is capable of being influenced."

George Smythe's kinsman and godfather, the Duke of Northumberland, subsidised his education at Cambridge. His own incisive record stands : "With talent, high spirit, courage, a spice of that genius which borders upon madness, I was given, as became

<sup>1</sup> Among the items which George Smythe had set down in his school-boy budget in apology for an expenditure of nearly ten shillings a week, over a period of ten months, were boots, haircutting, and *postage*. A later member for Canterbury, Mr. Henniker Heaton, was to avenge his predecessor, literally to the *uttermost penny*, by forcing on the Post Office the Imperial Penny Postage.

my rank and not my fortune, a noble education, by the monstrous caste system of the English universities. The associate of men ~~who~~ could spend a pound with less inconvenience than I could spend a shilling, . . . I was not to be outdone, and got involved in debt. I took my degree, one which, if utterly unworthy of my talents, was yet no proof that I did not read, and hard, too. . . . I came up to London with my boyhood over, with extravagant habits, and owing about £1200. As if the devil was determined to let loose upon me, when once well out of my depth, every wave in the river of damnation, I turned my thoughts to Parliament, Canterbury." That was in 1841, when George Smythe, not yet twenty-two, carried his election for the constituency with which his ancestors, the Sidneys of Penshurst, had been long associated; and the seat, which was calculated to cost only £2000, cost over £7000. "I had brought ruin upon you," (he tells his father), "upon my sisters, upon myself. Moreover, with my Cambridge debts, and with a petition hanging over my head, my position was anything but enviable. It was in this situation, weighed down by a sense of all the mischief I had done, that I tried to speak. I broke down, signally and miserably, my nerves going with a sort of crash. What a position! I might have recovered myself, but this is not an heroic age, and I took to drinking

as an opiate and an anodyne. Then came other mischiefs. I thought one way the winning way in politics ; you thought another ; and my life was an incessant wear and tear—shame, abuse, the world's scorn environing me on every side. What wonder, then, that my nervous system has never recovered those years of '41 and '42."

So wrote George Smythe to his father from Venice in 1846. So he wrote, and his words stand as the scored and underlined commentary of his father's mean suspicions of the Disraeli influence : a commentary only too crushing in its completeness. Disraeli was for George Smythe the heaven-sent leader and saviour, had his family but known. He, too, with debts had entered Parliament and failed in a first speech, and he had ready for George Smythe a recipe which included neither drinks nor drugs. This doubted Disraeli was he, let us recall, who had held fast, through good report and ill, to that Nationalist creed which was able to rouse in young men, left to their own fresh impulses, a redeeming enthusiasm ; that Disraeli whose "designs" were distrusted by a father frankly shown to be here, with callous opportunism, in search of the "winning side."

For the rest, George Smythe crossed his father once more in refusing to make matrimonial quarry of an heiress to restore his fortunes. He delivered a few brilliant speeches, and wrote a few brilliant sketches, so

Disraelian that Disraeli was able to put some of their passages into the mouths of his heroes, and none detect the difference of tone. He published his *Historic Fancies*, and he produced a novel, *Angela Pisani*, a medley of history and of sentiment, remarkable perhaps for the Napoleon-worship of which George Smythe may be called a pioneer among Englishmen; remarkable, too, and self-revealing in its presentation of the innate love of virtue in the heart of the heroine, unsupported by a will-power of the brain. He challenged Roebuck, committing thereby a breach of privilege, but no breach of the peace; he was praised by Peel, but he called the fair words of his leader "rancid butter," and made no headway with the Foreign Office under-secretaryship entrusted to him. He attracted Brougham's attention by his foreign policy articles in the *Morning Chronicle*; also the friendship of Faber—which he quoted as a testimonial when nearly all else was gone from him; and, two years after his succession to his father's peerage in 1855, he died of consumption—in all senses consumed away; one who had summed himself up: "My life has been made up of two blunders—I am a failure and I know it."

Yet not wholly; for he helped to create Coningsby, and he sat—to some purpose at last—for George Waldershare in *Endymion*:

"He was a young man of about three or four



and twenty years" (in the early days of Young England): "fair, with short curly brown hair and blue eyes; not exactly handsome, but with a countenance full of expression, and the index of quick emotions, whether of joy or of anger. He was one of those vivid and brilliant organisations which exercise a peculiarly attractive influence in youth. He had been the hero of the Debating Club at Cambridge, and many believed in consequence that he must become Prime Minister. . . . Waldershare was profligate but sentimental; unprincipled but romantic; the child of whim and the slave of imagination so freakish and deceptive that it was almost impossible to foretell his course. He was alike capable of sacrificing all his feelings to worldly considerations or of forfeiting the world for a visionary caprice."

And of his talk:

"It was a rhapsody of fancy, fun, knowledge, anecdote, brilliant badinage—even passionate seriousness. Sometimes he recited poetry, and his voice was musical; and when he had attuned his companions to a sentimental pitch, he would break into mockery, and touch with delicate satire every chord of human feeling."

George Smythe, misunderstood by his father, was sanely understood at last: all the Jekyll in him, all the Hyde. Disraeli, speaking of him by name in

his General Preface, written more than a dozen years after his friend's doom, hardly did more than abbreviate his novelist sketch: "George Smythe, afterwards seventh Lord Strangford, a man of brilliant gifts, of dazzling wit, infinite culture, and fascinating manners. His influence over youth was remarkable; he could promulgate a new faith with graceful enthusiasm."

So much it seems desirable to say of one of the few men who influenced Disraeli who influenced the nation. George Smythe has a second-hand fame; he is a part of the power behind the Disraelian throne. And for the scolding sixth Viscount, who did not *always* say agreeable things, there is secured a certain third-hand immortality as the father of the man who was Disraeli's friend. The revenges of Time are inexorable.



#### *At the Deepdene*

"The Evelyns have always had good mothers."

Writing to his sister in the September of 1843, Disraeli mentions that he and Mrs. Disraeli have just returned from a most agreeable visit to Deepdene: "One night I sat next to Mrs. Evelyn of Wotton, a widow; her son, the present squire, there also; a young Oxonian and full of Young England." Young England was then beginning to attract the smiles of

the press as a new party, and some serious sympathy in college halls.

Mr. John Evelyn of Wotton lives to tell with untouched vivacity the tale of that meeting. He remembers that he often went in his vacations to the Deepdene, where his neighbour, Mr. Henry Hope, played the part of a hospitable Mæcenas to the members of the Young England party in those glades and galleries the dedication of *Coningsby* commemorated in 1844. There he met George Smythe, M.P., reputed hero of *Coningsby*, twenty-five years of age in that year 1843 (as also was Lord John Manners), and Baillie Cochrane, M.P., the Buckhurst of the same novel. At the Deepdene, too, he met, oftener than her husband, Mrs. Disraeli, whom he recalls as remarkably girlish in manner, considering that she was in her fifties. On this single occasion of his meeting there with Disraeli, he was present only at dinner, and from across the table he watched his mother and Disraeli making good talk together. Driving home to Wotton under the stars, he asked her if Disraeli had said anything memorable. She answered with pride that he had said: "The Evelyns have always had good mothers." Her son, smiling, said: "That was a safe remark to make to you, mother; but I hardly think he can be so conversant with the annals of a quiet family like ours as the statement seems to imply." All the same, Disraeli spoke, in part at least, by the book—

by the book in which John Evelyn the Diarist pays filial tribute to the woman from whose sighs he derived his own breath of life.

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"Do you think Dr. Newman will be able to hold his ground at Oxford?"

This question was put by Disraeli at Deepdene to the "young Oxonian and full of Young England" on the occasion in question. After dinner, and when the men were about to join the ladies in the drawing-room, Disraeli stepped round to him with a query that showed him alert to acquire the living knowledge of which his books bore witness; discerning (as it here happened) in putting the right question in the right quarter; and ready, as usual, to consort with the new generation. Dr. Newman held his own for just two years longer; and Disraeli's regret at his going to Rome was expressed a generation later when he spoke of it in the General Preface to his novels, as dealing the Anglican Church a blow under which she still reeled. He pronounced it to be "a blunder." The phrase, in Newman's ears, must have smacked of Downing Street complacency; for he hit out at Disraeli with the opinion that the politician could be expected to view things other than merely politically as little as a chimpanzee could be expected to give birth to a human baby: a division, by inference, between politics and religion which at least two

modern Pontiffs (and Disraeli with them) repudiate and condemn.

When Mr. Evelyn, undergraduate no longer, was returned to Parliament for West Surrey in 1849, Disraeli, remembering the meeting, sent him a short note of congratulation. But though Mr. Evelyn sat among his supporters in the House, and attended Mrs. Disraeli's crushes at Grosvenor Gate, he had no further converse with Disraeli. The case is typical, and is worth a mention as explaining some of the difficulties of a Disraeli biographer. Mr. Evelyn had for a colleague Mr. Henry Drummond, one of the numerous members of the party who showed a rather open aversion from its great educator—masters, for one thing, are rarely popular with pupils. Possibly Mr. Evelyn was classed with his colleague by Disraeli, and, if so, unjustly. The fact remains that, for one reason or another, Disraeli had little or no private intercourse with numbers of men who were brought into close public association with him. He became absorbed in the public service; and, with party and State secrets in his keeping, he was too discreet to form many intimacies. These, such as they were, were kept in later life for women like Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield, in whom his trust was entire. But that early meeting with the unconventional Tory leader had its distinguishing influence on the future opinions of the young man.

*Sport and Politics*

"It is the Blue Riband of the Turf."

The phrase (sometimes quoted as Lord George Bentinck's) was characteristically Disraeli's, coined by him in 1848 on an occasion of which his pen has left the record :

"The day after the Derby, the writer met Lord George Bentinck in the library of the House of Commons. He was standing before the bookshelves with a volume in his hand, and his countenance was greatly disturbed. His resolutions in favour of the Colonial Interest after all his labours had been negatived by the Committee on the 22nd, and on the 24th his horse, Surplice, whom he had parted with among the rest of his stud, solely that he might pursue without distraction his labours on behalf of the great interests of the country, had won that paramount and Olympian stake to gain which had been the object of his life. He had nothing to console him, and nothing to sustain him except his pride. Even that deserted him before a heart which he knew at least could yield him sympathy. He gave a sort of superb groan :

" 'All my life I have been trying for this, and for what have I sacrificed it?' he murmured.

"It was in vain to offer solace.

" 'You do not know what the Derby is?' he moaned out.

“ ‘Yes, I do ; it is the Blue Riband of the ‘Turf.’ ”

“ ‘It is the Blue Riband of the ‘Turf,’ he slowly repented to himself, and sitting down at the table, he buried himself in a folio of statistics.”

Though Disraeli ranks not among wearers of the blue riband of the Garter who won “the Blue Riband of the ‘Turf,” he had had a moment’s dream of that double eminence. About half a dozen years before this interview he took a half-share, Lord George Bentinck the other, in a highly bred filly called Kitten, a daughter of Bay Middleton, a Derby winner, and of a winner of the Oaks. This pedigree was prolific of hopes never to be realised. Kitten was too light in the forelegs to stand training even for a two-year-old stake over a half-mile course ; and Lord Beaconsfield escaped the temptation to become the owner of a racing stable. What would have happened, had he, as well as the fourteenth Earl of Derby, been a racing man ? At a political crisis in 1850, when it was the fortunes of the Tory party that were at stake, Disraeli had to write from Hughenden :

“I go to town to-morrow to catch a council with Stanley, flitting between Whittlebury and Goodwood.”



“*The Dear Young Men*”

Of one who was young, and otherwise interesting

to Disraeli, and who, in the early stage of public office work, complained that it was dry, the minister said :

“ All details are dry ; he must not be discouraged, it is the same in every office. The main point is to get the first step on the ladder.”

This is one of Disraeli's many sayings of mature and late life evincing his practical sympathies with “ the New Generation.” Remembering his own “ miserable youth,” as he moodily called it when he thought only of the limitations then imposed on his ambitions by his want of means, he went out of his way, as a Minister, to discover talent in the young men about town and to foster and reward it. In the nominations for official work he made in this spirit, he had some failures and many successes. Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who had early succeeded to a large estate and lived in Grosvenor Street, “ was always playing at politics, and, being two and twenty, was discontented that he was not Chancellor of the Exchequer like Mr. Pitt.” But the “ little master ” who lay in wait for the Minister found him wary ; he discriminated ; when he saw talent, he welcomed it, not only among the scions of great political houses, the Hamiltons, the Lowthers, the Lennoxes, and the Stanhopes, but among men who, in this sense, had no connexions—so that a John Pope Hennessey, for instance, got at least his opportunity.



Everybody knows the panegyric which Sidonia (the first three letters of whose name are also the reversed three of Disraeli's own) passes on the achievements of youth—a panegyric which opens on a note of discrimination for the warning of succeeding generations of Bertie Tremaines :

“Do not suppose that I hold that youth is genius ; all I say is that genius, when young, is divine. Why, the greatest captains of ancient and modern times both conquered Italy at five and twenty. Youth, extreme youth, overthrew the Persian Empire. Don John of Austria won Lepanto at twenty-five. Gaston de Foix was only twenty-two when he stood a victor on the plain of Ravenna. Every one remembers Condé and Recroy at the same age. Gustavus Adolphus died at thirty-eight. Look at his captains. Cortes was little more than thirty when he gazed upon the golden cupolas of Mexico. When Maurice of Saxony died at the age of thirty-two all Europe acknowledged the loss of the greatest captain and the profoundest statesman of his age. Then there is Nelson, Clive. But these are great warriors, and perhaps you may think there are greater things than war. But take the most illustrious achievements of civil prudence. Innocent III., the greatest of the Popes, was the despot of Christendom at thirty-seven. John de' Medici was a cardinal at fifteen. He was Pope as Leo X. at thirty-seven. Luther robbed him of his

richest province at thirty-five. Take Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley—they worked with young brains. Ignatius was only thirty when he made his pilgrimage and wrote the *Spiritual Exercises*. Pascal wrote a great work at sixteen, and died at thirty-seven the greatest of Frenchmen. Ah! that fatal thirty-seven, which reminds me of Byron, greater even as a man than as a writer. Was it experience that guided the pencil of Raphael when he painted the palaces of Rome? He, too, died at thirty-seven. Richelieu was Secretary of State at thirty-one. Well, then, there were Bolingbroke and Pitt, both Ministers before other men left off cricket. Grotius was in great practice at seventeen and Attorney-General at twenty-four, and Acquaviva—Acquaviva was general of the Jesuits, ruled every cabinet in Europe, and colonised America before he was thirty-seven. That was indeed a position! But it is needless to multiply instances. The history of heroes is the history of youth."

From a man at the end of his own thirties came this panegyric, which was also a plea. For round about him had already gathered men younger than himself—men whose youth was so much their mark that it labelled, if it did not brand, them as the leaders of Young England. And let it be remembered that Disraeli did not create that party; what he did was to recognise it, where others smiled. For him, a man—a man always—who had worn

waistcoats of so many colours, the white waistcoat a Young Englander invented was no sign of effeminacy. Had he been a man of smiles, he could hardly have raised one at the appellation of the "White Waistcoat party" affixed in easy ridicule to men of large views, large sympathies, and, as the event has proved, of large influence over the course of public affairs. Disraeli became the expounder of a creed which was really a Cambridge Movement, and might be so called as a companion to the not far divided Oxford Movement that was its contemporary. Some years ago, Professor Saintsbury wrote a magazine article on the Young England Movement; and when he met Lord Houghton for the first time after its publication the Monckton-Milnes of old days said: "I wish you had told me you were going to write that. I could have set you right on a great many things which nobody knows now except Lord John Manners."

Lord Houghton, in answer to a suggestion that he should tell his story first-hand, said: "Well, I did think of writing something, but I am too old and it is too much trouble," and the only relevant point the Professor drew from the old Young Englander was the not new one to the knowing: "Disraeli knew nothing at all about it at first: he came in afterwards."

On this and other points the authority named by Lord Houghton is still with us, in venerable old

age; and in a communication made to me in May, 1903, John, Duke of Rutland, writes: "Lord Houghton was right. Lord Beaconsfield did not identify himself at first with the movement, but did so before long, and by the force of genius and longer experience at once became the real leader." The Oxford Movement had a definite day of birth assigned to it by Newman—namely, Keble's famous sermon in 1833, on the National Apostasy. The Cambridge Movement came into existence more informally. "It had no definite birthday," the Duke of Rutland declares, "no chairman, no secretary, no place of meeting; and consisted in the first instance of a few young men who had been friends at Cambridge, drawn together by political or ecclesiastical sympathies." It went out of existence equally without ceremony, having done its work. "When the great split occurred in 1846," the Duke writes, "Young England shared in the disruption. Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Augustus Stafford, I, and others became merged in the Protectionist ranks, and some followed Sir Robert Peel." For the time being, however, the Young Englanders made what would later have been called a Fourth Party: a fact not to be ignored in tracing the consistent thread of Disraeli's political career.

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A member of Parliament once asked Disraeli if he might introduce his young son to him, at the same

time adding a request that the Minister would offer to the boy a few words of advice he might always remember. Disraeli, protesting that the son could learn all things from his father, submitted to say :

“Be amusing. Never tell unkind stories ; above all, never tell long ones.”

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“You cannot say too many nice things. I am inordinately vain, and delight in praise.”

This was Disraeli's candour to Lady Lamington, whose guest he was shortly after his great reception at Oxford, in 1853. Lady Lamington (the wife of his old friend Baillie Cochrane) told him that the letters she got from undergraduates were filled with his praise.

“Read them all to me,” he said, when she paused, “I like to hear them all.” Praise from the young men never lost its savour for Disraeli. Lord Derby had been inaugurated as Chancellor ; but the receptions accorded to the two leaders showed Disraeli to be the idol of Young Oxford. The memory of that day of his D.C.L.—the honorary degree which his father had borne before him—was dear to him till the end of life.

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Domestic love—the patrimony of the Jewish race—had a conspicuous illustration in Disraeli ; and he knew even when he wrote of schoolboy life, the love

that two men of his race felt for each other, passing the love of women. His love for his father makes a delightful record ; there is nothing quite like it to be found in the memoirs of other statesmen, from Pitt to Macaulay and Gladstone. His brothers he loved to serve ; once to the petulance of Peel, who, purist as he proclaimed himself as to patronage, saw mighty impudence in a request for the post of clerk for Ralph Disraeli since it came from Benjamin, whose support of the Minister was not, like his courage in asking the favour, unflinching. This familiar love of fathers and brothers was not then so common among Englishmen as it now is. Some sons rarely saw their fathers, thought of them and addressed them by formal titles, and never kissed them. Disraeli was too manly to think that affection unmanned men ; and in this regard he may be quoted as one of the revivers of masculine friendships among Englishmen. " We are happy in our friends," declares one of his heroes, and those friends were not women. Horace had preceded him in that as in other respects, and if some might object that Frederick Faber got a little too near the hymnology in which he afterwards excelled when he told his friend, Lord John Manners, that he walked with " a radiance round his brows like saints in pictures," and apostrophised,

Thine eyes that do with such sweet skill express  
Thy soul's hereditary gentleness,

every one will admit that the growth of more romantic relations between persons of the same sex has added to existence one of its most enduring charms—a charm against the melancholy of loneliness, and a refuge from the fever of passion. In his life, as in his novels, male friends figure : a goodly, and a godly, fellowship ; far from it was the taint of effeminacy. Disraeli will long live as the promoter of sentiment, and sentiment wholly wholesome among “the dear young men.”

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Disraeli lived to see a later Fourth Party yield a later Chancellor of the Exchequer :

“Some people, judging young men, do not distinguish between what is shallow and what is callow—I say all the difference in the world. When I first remarked young Randolph Churchill, he was callow ; but ——” (mentioning another son of a duke) “never was callow, but only shallow, and will be all his life.”

Like most of Disraeli’s predictions, this last also has been remorselessly fulfilled.

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“Tell So-and-so to come to see me ; I like him very much.”

Constant was Disraeli’s interest in juniors who served him ; and this message was to one such,

sent through a friend, who adds: "Outsiders little knew the care and thought he always bestowed in endeavouring to ascertain who possessed the strongest qualifications for any post he had to give. As an instance, a short time before his death, one of the 'poor gentlemen's' posts in the Charterhouse fell into his gift. He took the utmost trouble about it, feeling anxious that the other 'poor gentlemen' should have a suitable person added to their number."

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To young Parliamentarians :

"Never explain."

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To a young man of fortune entering Parliament :

"Look at it as you will, ours is a beastly career."



### *Robes of Office*

"Oh, I find it uncommonly light."

So said Disraeli the first time he tried on the heavy robe of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1852). This and other expressions of the exhilaration he felt on entering high official life were preserved by Mr. George H. Parkinton, who was clerk to Baron Parke, and who did that most unusual thing among men who met Disraeli—used his ears and eyes and kept



a diary. This is Mr. Parkinton's private entry under date June 12th, 1852 :

"Mr. Disraeli, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, came down about two o'clock to be sworn in. He was quite alone, and Davis, the usher, showed him into the judges' private room, where I happened to be arranging some papers. I placed him a chair, and said I would go and tell the judges he had arrived. In a few minutes they came in—Lord Chief Baron Pollock, Baron Parke, Alderson, Rolfe, and Platt. All seemed to know him, and all talked and laughed together.<sup>1</sup> His new black silk robe, heavily embroidered with gold bullion fringe and lace, was lying across a chair.

"'Here, get on your gown,' said Baron Alderson ; 'you'll find it monstrously heavy.'

"'Oh, I find it uncommonly light,' said the new Chancellor.

"'Well, it's heavy with what makes other things light,' said the Lord Chief Baron.

"'Now, what am I to say and do in this performance?' was the next question.

"'Why, you'll first be sworn in by Vincent, and then you'll sit down again ; and if you look to the extreme left of the first row of counsel you will see a

<sup>1</sup> Lord Chief Baron Pollock had known the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a young member of Parliament against whom, self-defended, he had appeared with the Attorney-General and other big-wigs in the Austin breach of privilege case



DISRAELI AT THE MALL OF HIS FIRST BECOMING CHANCELLOR OF THE  
EXCHEQUER.

[To face p. 98.]



rather tall man looking at you. That is Mr. Willes out of court, but Mr. Tubman in court, and you must say, "Mr. Tubman, have you anything to move?" He will make his motion, and when he sits down you must say, "Take a rule, Mr. Tubman," and that will be the end of the affair.'

"The ushers were summoned, and all marched to the bench—Baron Platt as junior baron first, Mr. Disraeli last, immediately preceded by the Lord Chief Baron. Mr. Vincent, the Queen's Remembrancer, administered the ancient oath, in Norman-French I think, Mr. Tubman (afterwards Mr. Justice Willes) made some fictitious motion, was duly desired to take a rule, and the Chancellor and barons returned to the private room.

" 'Well, I must say you fellows have easy work to do if this is a specimen,' said Mr. Disraeli.

" 'Now, don't you think that, or you'll be cutting down our salaries,' replied one of the judges.

" 'Take care of that robe,' said Baron Alderson; 'you can leave it to your son when the Queen makes him a Chancellor.'

" 'Oh no; you've settled that business,' said the new Chancellor; 'you'd decide that was fettering the Royal prerogative.'

"There was a general roar at this witty allusion to a very important case just decided by the House of Lords, in which the Peers had held that a

large monetary bequest by the late Earl of Bridgwater to his son, on condition that he should obtain the title of duke within a certain time, was void on the ground that it was a fettering of the Royal prerogative. There was a mutual shaking of hands, and all parties separated."



*Mrs. Brydges Willyams, Benefactress*

To a Devonshire man whom Disraeli met as a fellow-guest of Monckton-Milnes at Fryston in the first 'fifties :

"Do you know a mad woman named Willyams at Torquay?"

Disraeli, who, on first acquaintance with his future wife, rallied her as "a rattle and a flirt"—a married flirt—was equally unexpected in his reading of the character of Mrs. Brydges Willyams, who later showed her lunacy by leaving him her fortune. When he put this query, he did not know her, and the letter she had written to him, offering homage and asking advice, he had put into the fire. Luckily for him, and her, the lady possessed some of the persistency she admired in her hero; and the letters he later addressed to her allow the opportunity of telling her strange story in another place. The Fryston guest, who knew her only by reputation, assured the inquirer that, though perhaps eccentric, she was certainly sane. The sequel

is told later in the story of "The Woman of the Windfall."



"There *was* a Palmerston."

This new version of the "So passeth the glory of the world away" was whispered by Disraeli to Henry Bulwer on the stairs at Holland House when Lord Palmerston had, in fact, received a check (no more) in his career by his dismissal from the Foreign Office. The confident air of the Minister added to the jubilation which his resignation spread among his opponents. "He reminds one of a favourite footman on easy terms with his mistress," Disraeli had said of him long before. The casiness of the Foreign Secretary's terms with his mistress Queen Victoria was, however, the cause of his dismissal; for at the critical time of the *coup d'état*, Lord Palmerston wrote hasty messages without consulting the Queen, who disapproved them, and whose appeal to the Cabinet resulted in Palmerston's withdrawal.



### *Middlingness*

A common remark of Disraeli's in his own and the nineteenth century's 'forties :

"I get duller every day."

Stevenson, dying much younger than Disraeli, was proportionately early in coming to the middle age

that is marked by the middling act, rather than by impulse ; the age that does not boldly adventure, but "watches and counts." Stevenson clung to youth, if only as an artistic stock-in-trade. "Don't give in that you are ageing, and you won't age. I have exactly the same faults and qualities still ; only a little duller, greedier, and better-tempered ; a little less tolerant of pain and more tolerant of tedium."

Disraeli, like most youths of imagination, dreaded middle age :

"I remember when the prospect of losing my youth frightened me out of my wits ; I dreamt of nothing but grey hairs, a paunch, and the gout or the gravel."

Things often look worse in prospect than they turn out to be on closer approach. Disraeli realised, with Lord Cadurcis, that "every period of life has its pleasures" ; and even when the gout (alone of his list of presentiments) racked him in advanced age, he thought life still worth living.



"*Nobody* is quite well."

That was Disraeli's reply, late in life, when Mrs. Duncan Stewart asked him if he were "quite well." "Nobody is quite well" is perhaps capable of this interpretation—that health is always delicate as a

subject of inquiry ; especially when the query implies such patronage as may be suspected in a strong man's query to a weak one, or a young man's to an older one. Did not Queen Victoria snap a great ecclesiastical dignitary's head off on her Diamond Jubilee day, he expressing, with pious unction, the hope that she was not too greatly fatigued ? "Why should I be ?" she tartly demanded ; for really he was only a few years younger than she, and looked, in the said function, far more "distressed." There is a certain quality of irritation, too, in the query "How are you?" extorted at the dictation of a chance meeting—that is to say, if people are expected to reply. As a phrase bandied between passers-by, it is a mere salute ; it exacts no counter-cry except a repetition of itself—a barren formula, indeed, but one that does not bore. Disraeli's reply may be commended for use to those who will not compromise themselves by a boastful admission of vulgar health, but have too much dignity to enter upon personal details : that diagnosis which produces more weariness and despair in the hearer than ever the utterer experienced. As a statement of fact, too, the Disraelian saying stands. No civilised body ever is quite well—that is to say, perfectly developed for all its multifarious offices ; and the more civilised, perhaps, the worse it must be. How can a genus that is in transformation—shedding hair, teeth, nails, and toes—be feeling "quite well" in the process ?



The poets, whom Disraeli knew for our greatest, are even now among their fellows what the pearl was popularly believed to be among oyster-shells—a disease; they attain beauty by disaster. As for philosophers, Mr. Herbert Spencer used to assure his friends that he “had not known a day’s health for fifty years”—and that number must be sixty now.

Despite her luckless question, Mrs. Duncan Stewart was reported to be a good talker; and she knew the Disraelis from their earlier married life. “One day,” she reports, “when I was sitting alone in my house at Liverpool, a note of introduction was brought in for me from Mr. Milner Gibson, whom I had known in London, and the cards of Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli. He was a young man then, all curly and smart, and his wife, though much older than himself, was a very handsome, imperial-looking woman.” It is on the unverified gossip of this Mrs. Duncan Stewart that Lady Beaconsfield has been discovered as originally a factory-girl whom Mr. Wyndham Lewis saw going to her work, “beautiful and with bare feet.” Nobody is quite well-informed.



### *Trepidations*

Disraeli, who knew railways when they were yet a novelty, never got over a certain nervousness about catching a train.

"Do not let me be late," he said to his hostess at the close of a visit to Lamington. "So many friends say, 'You have five minutes more,' and I am tempted to linger, although I like to be at the station at least a quarter of an hour before the time of starting."

In ways other than those of the rail, Disraeli showed himself a man of instant anxieties. A seemingly phlegmatic may in reality be a very nervous man. The "mask," as Von Angeli called it, or the "brazen mask" of Mr. Balfour's ascription, was, in Disraeli's case, a veritable mask to this extent—it covered a multitude of perturbations. The Sphinx hesitated, had its tremors and palpitations for all it looked out on mankind with a surface calm. The great houses, opening their portals to Disraeli the Younger, offered hospitality to a guest who was never quite at happy ease among strangers; and, like his own Tancred, he had to recall his noble aims and ends as he climbed staircases and heard his name thrown from one servant to another. The hostess who heard it smiled graciously on a young man who seemed imperturbable enough without, but was dynamic within. Disraeli had the nervous man's one hope—courage. He did not fly; he overcame. He liked to be asked to the Royal Academy Banquet; but on such occasions there was an indigestion under his plate in the slip of paper containing the name of his

toast. His buttoning and unbuttoning of his coat during the stress of a Parliamentary oration, his handkerchief play, and half his gestures, were the tricks of a speaker in search of distractions that put him and his audience at ease. He never made a speech of any consequence that did not cost him a moment of reluctance. A great triumph, too, went near to unnerving him. At Oxford in 1853 the new D.C.L. had more than his usual pallor when he bowed in response to the deafening plaudits of the undergraduates.

An instance of Disraeli's nervous anxiety in affairs of State, even those that did not involve a public appearance, is supplied by an incident at the time of his formation of the Conservative Ministry of 1874. Much, in his mind, depended on the adhesion of Lord Salisbury, a colleague who had looked on him askance, and had held him up to obloquy in the *Saturday Review*—hence Disraeli's reference to this "master of flouts and gibes" who had attacked him, he said, before he was his colleague, and after he was his colleague—"I do not know if he attacked me when he was my colleague." Lord Salisbury had, moreover, deserted him at the critical moment in both Disraeli's and his party's fortunes, when Disraeli settled the question of Reform, and, in so doing, bequeathed to Lord Salisbury the long tenure of power he did not himself live to see. How

complete a convert to the principle of an extended franchise—dear from the first to Disraeli, who bided his time—Lord Salisbury later became, may be inferred from his willingness to declare war against the Boers in order to gain for his countrymen in Johannesburg the privilege he had denied to his countrymen at home. Whether Disraeli, who had a high respect for race, and who always felt grateful to the Dutch for the hospitality extended to his grandfather in Amsterdam, would have welcomed the promulgation of Reform by the mouth of the cannon is a point I leave to the pedants of the Athenæum Club who used to spend hours—and tempers—in discussing whether Macaulay, if alive, would rank as a supporter of Mr. Gladstone's scheme of Home Rule.

Disraeli, however, bore no personal ill-will; nor was it possible for him to gratify a private grudge, if grudge there had been, at the cost of the party's, and consequently the public, interest. Lord Salisbury had, therefore, to be secured for the Administration demanded by the decisive Conservative majority secured at the polls in 1874. From Whitehall Gardens Disraeli wrote a note to Arlington Street, asking Lord Salisbury to call that afternoon at five o'clock. As the hour approached, Disraeli felt keen anxiety. He watched the clock uneasily; and as the hand approached the stroke he became feverishly restless. He prescribed for himself a stroll on the Embankment,

and, leaving word that he would be back in five minutes and that Lord Salisbury, if he came meanwhile, was to be kept, he paced the pavement, building castles in air, fair to see, only to demolish them as they reached their crown. Returning, he was told that Lord Salisbury had called, but had not accepted the invitation to wait. This was torment. He climbed into a hansom—in no mood, be sure, to say with Lothair (“leaping” into his), “’Tis the gondola of London”—and reached Arlington Street before Lord Salisbury’s return. Only a few minutes longer lasted the suspense which the *contretemps* had increased. Disraeli came away with the knowledge that Lord Salisbury would take office, owning him chief—the greatest mark of confidence, Peel had said, that one man can show towards another.

When, after the “Peace with Honour” triumph Lord Salisbury shared with Disraeli, the forces of Toryism suffered defeat, and Disraeli was without what he called “a home,” the Salisburys put Hatfield at his disposal during one of their absences abroad. Disraeli loved its library; above all, he valued the evidence this house-lending gave him of the establishment of intimate confidence between him and the former foe of his own household; and there, to the proud records of the Cecils, he added yet another item—that of this peaceful sojourn of his own beneath the roof long associated with their race



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NO 10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL

Diurnal & official residence, 1871—1880,

[To face p 108]



*Memories*

James Clay, M.P. for Hull : "Well, Disraeli, when you and I travelled together years ago, who would ever have thought that you would be Prime Minister ?"

Disraeli : "Who, indeed ! But as we used to say when we were in the East, 'God is great,' and *now He's greater than ever.*"

The acquaintance between the Disraeli family and James Clay (who was the son of a London merchant, and educated at Winchester and Balliol) began early in Disraeli's and, therefore, in Clay's life—for both were born in the same year (1804); but it was not at first a very smiling attachment. So we may gather from Disraeli's phrase on meeting him unexpectedly in Malta in 1830: "James Clay here, immensely improved." Not that he need have been very low down at the outset, seeing to what pinnacle his "improvement" raised him : "He has already beat the whole garrison at rackets and billiards and other wicked games, given lessons to their *prima donna*, and *seccatura'd* the *primo tenore*. Really he has turned out a most agreeable personage. Lord Burghersh wrote an opera for him and Lady Normanby a farce. He dished Prince Pignatelli at billiards and did the Russian Legation at *écarté*." A man of discernment, too ; for, conscious of his own success as he was, he was thus reported of by Disraeli : "Clay confesses *my* triumph



is complete and unrivalled." The two friends became travelling companions, quitted Malta on a yacht which Clay hired ("he intends to turn pirate") and on which ("it bears the unpoetical title of *Susan*, which is a bore") Disraeli and Meredith became "passengers at a fair rate, and he drops us whenever and wherever we like." In their future wanderings Disraeli continued (it is not always so in such cases) to find Clay "a very agreeable companion"; and when both returned to England in 1831 the comradeship did not end; for Disraeli several years later went electioneering (unsuccessfully) in the North with his friend, and they afterwards confronted each other from opposite sides in the House of Commons. Clay, returned for Hull in 1847, became something of an authority on shipping, and a yet greater authority on whist.

In the hurly-burly of politics the Tory leader found time to exchange memories of the rare old times with the Liberal member, to whom he was "Ben" to the end. That end came in 1873 to Clay, after whom, during his fatal illness, the statesman, so directing a daily walk at Brighton, regularly called to inquire. Of Clay's four sons, of whom the world has heard, the eldest, Harry Ernest Clay (now named by Royal licence Ker-Seymer), went into diplomacy; and another brother had the rare distinction of serving as secretary at different times both Gladstone

and Disraeli. To a third, well known in society and as a playwright, I must express my indebtedness for these memories of his father's famous friendship. He can vaguely recall dinner-table chaff in which Disraeli says of some Bill that it is "dead as Lazarus," and Clay retorts: "But, Ben, Lazarus rose again." It is always an agreeable note when loyal sons reserve for their fathers all the appropriate remarks.

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"When I was young and abroad I met one of the Gordons—a Sir Charles, not unlike his brother, Lord Aberdeen, the Foreign Minister, except that the family frigidity of the Gordons had not in his case subsided into sullenness."

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"If we must have wanderings from truth, let them at least be on agreeable byways. The first time I dined with a British Governor was at Gibraltar, and on that occasion the hostess said that she was unwell, but made the effort to come to table on my account. I knew it was a fib. Yet, over decades of years, I still recall as a true kindness her ladyship's flattering falsity. Lying is a crime only where it is a cruelty."

To a bachelor, of whom he asked, "Where do you live now?" and who replied that he was what Disraeli had described in one book as "that true freeman, a man in chambers," and, in another book

as "the only real monarch," Disraeli, with a revised judgment, replied :

"A desolate monarchy."

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"When I meet a man whose name I have utterly forgotten, I say :

" 'And how is the old complaint ? ' "

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To one who asked Disraeli if the uses of adversity really were sweet :

"Yes, if the adversity does not last too long."

He spoke as a specialist : but even specialists speak ambiguously. "Enough is as good as a feast." But who, for any but himself, shall define the "enough" ?



### *Patronage*

After listening to the first speech made by Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough :

"Oho ! we have got a customer here ! "

The subject of this bluffly comprehensive and incoherently expressive exclamation (of a kind that sometimes surprised idealists on the lips of Dante Rossetti as well as of Disraeli) was himself of Disraeli's appointing. With due deference to local needs, and a recognition of the fact that if the Church of Rome

is a Church of Promises, the National Church is by its nature a Church of Compromises, he gave Liverpool its Dr. Ryle. Other ecclesiastical appointments of his may be here enrolled : Dr. Archibald Tait to Canterbury, a "sound Churchman" suited to his day, of whom his wife playfully reported "he believes all Catholic doctrine except the celibacy of the clergy;" Dr. Jackson to London; Dr. Lightfoot to Durham, gratified by the advent of a scholar; Dr. Atlay to Hereford; Dr. Wordsworth to Lincoln; Dr. Thorold to Rochester, a prelate who had Mr. Labouchere for a brother-in-law and, an only less irrelevance, a convert to the Roman Catholic Church for his only son; Dr. Claughton to St. Albans; Dr. Basil Jones to St. David's; Dr. M'Lagan to Lichfield; Dr. Rowley Hill to Sodor and Man, and Dr. Benson to Truro—the future holder of the See of Canterbury.

To York Deanery Disraeli sent Dr. Purey-Cust; to Lichfield Dr. Bickersteth—both of them Archdeacons of Buckingham; Dr. Herbert to Hereford; Dr. Stewart Perowne to Peterborough; Dr. Burgon to Chichester; Dr. Grantham Yorke and Lord A. Compton to Worcester; Dr. Boyle to Salisbury. To a canonry at St. Paul's he presented Dr. Gregory; to a canonry at Oxford, Dr. Bright; to a canonry at York, Dr. Forester, of a family long known to him. The list, though long, justifies itself; and other names might be added in illustration of the

discretion of Disraeli's nominations : nearly all criticised and contested at the time of their making ; and all alike approved, perhaps only too indiscriminately, when death, in this case or that, silenced the clamour of individual rivalry.

The memory of a Derby-Disraeli Church appointment for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer took the moral responsibility in the House of Commons was recalled lately (1903) by the death of Lady Harriet Duncombe, an old acquaintance of Disraeli's, in her ninety-fourth year. She was Lady Harriet Douglas, daughter of the fifth Marquis of Queensberry, when she married the Rev. and Hon. (they used to place it "Hon. and Rev." in those days) Augustus Duncombe, whose subsequent appointment as Dean of York was wrangled over in the House of Commons as a purely political one. But if the new Dean did not rank as a Father of the Church, he was much more than the mere son of a peer who supported the Government. No Dean, at the end of a long rule, was ever so popular in York ; and having inherited, though a younger son, a large fortune from his father (there was once a saving Lord Feversham), he was able to devote the whole of his stipend as Dean to the preservation of the splendid minster's fabric. Nor has that great work gone unremembered in the bequests of ladies of his family. Disraeli lived to see the impugned appointment justified, not only

by his man's career, but, as nearly always happened to him in such cases, by converted public opinion. If he sought a more mundane reward, he must have found it later in the mere sight of those grand-nieces of the Dean, who, at the end of his life, took the town with beauty.

Near to the close of his official life (1877) Lord Beaconsfield gave to a clergyman's son an appointment over which the customary hue and cry was raised. This was a scandal—barefaced, undeniable—the removal of Mr. Digby Pigott from the War Office to be Comptroller-General of Stationery, with the modest salary of £800 a year. For the transfer of a civil servant from one department to another he had abounding precedents. The grievance lay elsewhere—that Mr. Pigott's father had once upon a time been Vicar of Hughenden. Mr. John Holms startled Hackney and the House of Commons with the dark discovery; and the belief was hinted that the vicar, with his family, had "rendered valuable political assistance to the Premier." Those were the years of the silence of Lord Beaconsfield. He relied on the general good sense and good feeling of the Islanders—sometimes, as now for a moment, in vain. The opposition mustered, and in a House at less than half power on the Government side, the appointment of Mr. Digby Pigott was censured by 156 against 152 votes—a hostile majority of four. The

new Comptroller resigned ; but Lord Beaconsfield refused to let him go. The case was now one of personal justice ; and he could not let the folly of the Commons interfere. The House of Lords now became the scene of the farce ; and there one actor invested it at once with dignity. Answering the suggestion (enforced by the vote of many men who had dispensed public patronage to their sons, brothers, and nephews and cousins) that this promotion had been controlled by private family friendship, Lord Beaconsfield was able to say that Mr. Digby Pigott had been recommended for the post by an old public office hand.

“I do not know Mr. Digby Pigott,” the Premier added, “even by sight. Thirty years ago there was a vicar in my parish of the name of Pigott, and he certainly was the father of Mr. Digby Pigott. Shortly after I went to that property, Mr. Pigott resigned his living and went to a distant county. With regard to our intimate friendship and his electioneering assistance, all I know of his interference in county elections is that before he departed from the County of Buckingham he registered a vote against me.”

The comedy was at an end : “the defence was complete,” acknowledged the *Daily News*. But it was one of the many comedies in which Disraeli played, but was not the comedian, and for which our

Islanders, the most easily amused in the world, looking backward, can find no laugh.



*A Constitutional Prelate*

To Dr. Ryle, on his appointment as Bishop of Liverpool :

“I think, sir, you have a good constitution.”

In earlier days, Disraeli set forth with biting satire the motives governing the choice of the bishops :

“It began to be discerned that the time had gone by for bishoprics to serve as appanages for the younger sons of great families. The Arch-Mediocrity [Peel] who then governed this country was impressed with the necessity of reconstructing the Episcopal Bench on principles of personal distinction and ability. But his notion of clerical capacity did not soar higher than a private tutor who had suckled a young noble into university honours ; and his test of priestly celebrity was the decent editorship of a Greek play. He sought for the successors of the Apostles, for the stewards of the mysteries of Sinai and of Calvary, among third-rate hunters after syllables.”

By the time Disraeli became himself a bishop-maker, he knew that local demands, advanced through political channels, must carry the day. Hence a Low



Churchman must go to Liverpool, a city represented in Parliament and in this nomination by his colleague, Lord Sandon.

The making of a bishop, even of a bishop who does not fully accept the mystic significance of the rites he retains, must nevertheless be in some sense an affair of mystery, so that a very candid relation of this Liverpool bishop's experiences, made by himself, bears repetition. "My life," the late Dr. Ryle said, "has been a very curious one. I was not brought up for the Church. The last thing I should have expected was that I should ever be a clergyman. My father was a wealthy man. He was a landed proprietor and a banker; I was the eldest son, and looked forward to inheriting a large fortune. I was on the point of entering Parliament. I had all these things before me till I was twenty-five; but it then pleased God to alter my prospects in life through my father's bankruptcy." The father, one supposes (and possibly the creditors), would have preferred some other manifestation of the son's vocation. Moreover, the episode puts Dr. Ryle where he would have felt least comfortable—in line with Manning and Newman, both of whose fathers, by their business failures, determined the clerical career for their sons. The Bishop continues: "I never thought that a man who had taken such a decided stand as a Protestant clergyman, as an Evangelical clergyman, would ever

be called upon by the Prime Minister to take a different position. I always thought the quiet men, those who won't kick up a row, those who could be trusted to go quietly and gently, were chosen. But, as you are aware, I was offered by Lord Beaconsfield the deanery of Salisbury. I did not like it at all. I went to Salisbury, and the more I looked at it the less I liked it. I felt like a dog with his tail between his legs. But although I did not feel comfortable, I felt that it was my duty to go. But I was suddenly relieved by a telegram from Lord Beaconsfield's secretary asking me to go to London for an interview on a very important matter. I felt it my duty to go, and I saw Lord Sandon, the member for Liverpool, who told me they had sent for me for the simple purpose of asking me whether I would accept the bishopric of Liverpool. I said: 'I am not so young as some people. I am not a wealthy man to take a new bishopric.' He replied: 'We know all that; we have made up our minds about that; the question is, Will you take the bishopric of Liverpool or not?' I said: 'My lord, I will go.' I thought it was a clear, plain call of duty. I would much rather wear out as Bishop of Liverpool than rust out as Dean of Salisbury. Well, I asked Lord Sandon several questions, which he answered, and, this ended, I was taken in to Lord Beaconsfield, who gave me an interview, kind and

courteous as one would expect from that wonderful statesman. He gave me excellent advice, which I hope I shall never forget. I told him I was not so young as I used to be, I did not get younger. He took a good look at me from head to foot,"—and said the words which begin the paragraph, "I think, sir, you have a good constitution."

A great statesman's first thought, Disraeli once said, must be for the health of the people; and, in this case, he evidently took comfort in the strength of the people's Bishop. The words, spoken in 1880, were amply verified by the duration and the energy of Dr. Ryle's episcopal career. In this case, a Bishop bred a Bishop; the constitutional Bishop at Liverpool has supplied an equally energetic prelacy to Winchester—a double event, duly noted, one hopes, as a double consolation to the creditors, and their descendants, if such there be, under the bankruptcy that brought it all about. This digression is one that leads us back again into the broad Disraelian path; and there you say, what Stevenson had the luck to say when he came out of arid rocky country on to the Pacific slope of woods and streams: "It is like meeting your wife." Most of all, in presence of Disraeli, even when sententious, does one become sensitive to the comicality of other men's conventions.

Disraeli, among other ancient courtesies, retained to the last this use of "Sir" in conversation, especially

with ecclesiastics. When he made Lothair address Cardinal Grandison with a "Sir" (as he himself addressed Cardinal Manning in speech with him), he was lectured in some quarters for a lapse from the "My lord" and the "Your Eminence." Disraeli, meant, and Manning suffered, no derogation. Kings and princes are "Sirs" by right—Cardinals are princes of the Church; and St. John addressed an angel, "Sir, thou knowest": one title let us welcome as held in common by a heavenly spirit and the loin of Old England's beef.



*A Greater that Includes a Less*

"Remember, Mr. Dean, no dogmas, no deans"

—a reminder addressed to Dean Stanley, who made the most of his "breadth" to Disraeli, thinking, but quite mistakenly, that this would please him. Disraeli's own feelings about ceremonies and dogmatic teaching were again and again expressed. "What you call forms and ceremonies," said Mr. Lys, the clergyman in *Sybil*, who has all the sympathy of his creator, "represent the devotional instincts of our nature"; and, speaking boldly for himself at Manchester in 1872, he said:

"I would wish Churchmen, and especially the clergy, always to remember that in our Father's

house there are many mansions ; and I believe that this comprehensive spirit is perfectly consistent with the maintenance of formularies and the belief in dogmas, without which, I hold, no practical religion can exist. "

No, nor Deans either.



***"Peace with Honour "***

At the dinner-table of the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, after the close of the Berlin Conference :

" When I first went into Bismarck's cabinet, his favourite dog rose, wagged his tail, and licked my hand. When Prince Gortschakoff came in, the discerning creature recognised the bear and nearly made an end of him."

Bismarck agreed with his dog. In these private talks the two men found themselves in accord, not merely on the necessity for "strong governments," but on a good many personal appreciations. If Lord Beaconsfield, with incautious detail, predicted that Gladstone would die in a monastery or a madhouse, Bismarck also fell into "the most gratuitous form of human error" by prophesying that, when politically played out, Gladstone would make a new stir by "going over" to Rome, and, if he were a widower, would yet be heard of as the most reactionary member of the College of Cardinals,

In the *Conversations* Bismarck—the Carlyle of practical politics—is reported as saying: “I repeatedly had Lord Beaconsfield to spend the evening with me during the Berlin Congress. As he was unwell, he only came on condition of being alone, and I thus had many an opportunity of getting to know him well. I must say that in spite of his fantastic novel-writing, he is a capable statesman, far above Gortschakoff and many others. It was easy to transact business with him. In a quarter of an hour you knew exactly how you stood with him; the limits to which he was prepared to go were clearly defined, and a rapid summary soon defined matters. Beaconsfield speaks magnificent and melodious English, and has a good voice. He spoke nothing but English at the Congress. The Crown Princess asked me about this time whether Beaconsfield did not speak French very beautifully. I answered that I had not heard anything of it till then.

But in the Congress?’ she inquired further. ‘He only speaks English,’ said I.”

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To a friend who congratulated him on his “Peace with Honour” triumph:

“Yes; but it has come too late.”

As Sir Stafford Northcote afterwards said of his attitude at this period of his life: “His heart was in the sepulchre of his wife at Hughenden.”

Needless to say, Lord Beaconsfield did not originate the "Peace with Honour" phrase. It was when Burke moved his resolution for conciliation with the American colonies that he said : "The superior Power may offer peace with honour." Whether Lord Beaconsfield had that phrase in mind, or coined it afresh, as a multitude of tongues must have coined it before Burke and since, scarcely matters.



"Oh, it is age that tires me."

Lord Beaconsfield retorted thus in Berlin when Lord Odo Russell expressed the fear that the Congress was very fatiguing. Lord Odo Russell was a convert to the power and spirit of Lord Beaconsfield as a diplomatist, no less than was Bismarck. He agreed when the German Chancellor said of Lord Beaconsfield : "He has wonderful presence of mind ; is versatile and energetic ; lets nothing excite him ; and has admirably defended his cause." Not long after the Congress, Bismarck, in his private cabinet, pointed out three portraits to a visitor. "There," he said, "hangs the portrait of my Sovereign ; there on the right, that of my wife ; there on the left, that of Lord Beaconsfield." After the death of Lord Beaconsfield, Bismarck telegraphed to Lord Rowton, whose acquaintance he made during the Congress, a true expression of sympathy and regret,

*The Golden Wreath*

“ You have now got what you desired.”

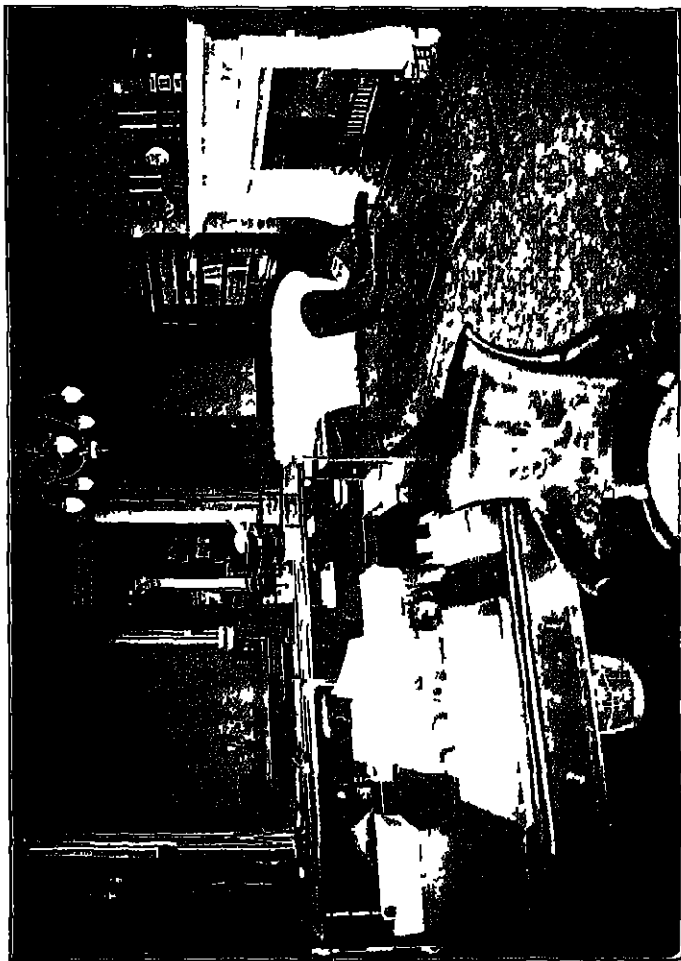
So said Lord Beaconsfield, one August afternoon in 1879, to a venerable-looking man who accosted him in Bond Street and introduced himself as “the unfortunate Tracy Turnerelli.” The Chief, in those troubled times, challenged in the street by an ordinary stranger, would hardly have delayed to parley; the secretary, on whose arm he leant, would have lingered, if he must, to bandy words. But Tracy Turnerelli was no ordinary man. He looked so like a philanthropist that he had an actor’s interest and an actor’s sincerity in playing the part. The son of an Anglicised Italian sculptor of some eminence, he had lived among artists; and his travels had not cured him of an inveterate habit of self-advertisement, any more than his marriage with a Hankey had warned him from adventures which earned him the added sobriquet of Pankey. In common with the rest of the world, I laughed at his golden wreath; then, after a talk with him, I mourned the rather. He was so plausible, that he perforce deceived himself; his facts would not bear to be faced, nor his figures to be checked. The tinsel golden wreath which he devised for Lord Beaconsfield’s acceptance, as the “People’s Tribute” of fifty-two thousand pennies, might lead, somebody suggested, to the minister’s impeachment for traitorous



assumption of a crown. On that tangent, the impulsive Tracy would tear away: would write letters, consult lawyers, imagine himself brought to the block, and dare it; forgetting, the while, the real obstacles which he himself, hardly witting what he did, had laid across his own primrose path. These were set forth with a precision which I, who knew the old man, a little winced under, but perhaps he hardly at all:

"10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,  
"June 16th, 1879.

"SIR,—Lord Beaconsfield desires me to inform you that he has received and carefully considered your letter of the 8th inst., in which you ask him to name a day for the presentation of a laurel wreath procured by the contributions of upwards of fifty thousand of the people, which have been collected, according to your statement, with 'immense labour and never-yet-exampléd efforts.' His lordship has, moreover, had before him the correspondence which during the last five years you have addressed to him, and he notices especially your complaints that your services have received no recognition at the hands of the leaders of the Conservative party, and the expression of your hope that 'sooner or later they will meet with reward.' Although Lord Beaconsfield would fully appreciate and value a spontaneous gift from his fellow-subjects belonging to a class in which he has



*Photo by H. A. King, Steam Road, London*

THE PALM MINISTRY'S ROOM, 10, DOWNING STREET

Showing Lord Be non-hold's desk and chair

*To first / 10*



ever taken the warmest interest, he cannot but feel that, being himself intimately connected with honours and rewards, he is precluded by the spirit in which you have previously addressed him from accepting a gift thus originated, and proffered in a manner which he cannot deem satisfactory. I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

“ALGERNON TURNOR.”

Tracy Turnercelli was not crushed: he had unbounded elasticity. Now he had exposed himself as the much misunderstood as well as much unappreciated labourer called to martyrdom, instead of merited reward. Reward—there was the rub. A couple of months passed thus, when the neglected man met the Minister face to face. His own account needs to be supplemented, perhaps, by some such leading speech as “The only reward I wanted was a friendly shake of the hand,” provoking the reply of Lord Beaconsfield, already quoted: “You have now got what you desired.”

“These words were addressed to me yesterday afternoon, by Lord Beaconsfield, between 5 and 6 p.m. Had they been addressed to me, as I hoped, at the Crystal Palace” (where the wreath had been exhibited), “or even in Downing Street, in the presence of the Press, I should have been satisfied, and have required no more from the Premier. But they were addressed to me on the pavement of Bond Street. I was coming

from Hunt & Roskell's when a gentlemanly looking old man, leaning on the arm of a younger man, passed me. I had never before seen Lord Beaconsfield, but I saw at a glance it was he. I bowed to him. He returned my bow. 'May I have the pleasure of shaking hands with you, my lord,' I said. 'I am the unfortunate Tracy Turnercelli !' His lordship shook hands with me cordially—well he might—adding the above words: 'You have now got what you desired.' I did desire that ; but I desired more—it was publicly for the Premier to tell the nation I had served him and the country. As I am a gentleman, I repeated my bow and walked on ; for the streets are not the place for anything but civilities ; but elsewhere I would have added, 'I want more, my lord, justice ! that justice I have asked of your lordship, of the Prince and Princess of Wales, of the Queen, and which, in a month, on a hundred platforms, if I live and health permits, I intend, after my summer holiday, to ask of the people.' Will his lordship prevent me by acting fairly towards me before the session is over ? I know not. But, whatever I write and whatever I say, I trust his lordship will not forget I treated him as a Christian gentleman should do—shook hands with him, spite of the injury he has done me—and look to him to act in the same way to me, even when painful words are being written and uttered."

So, by degrees, the golden wreath—which Tracy Turnerelli tried on—went the way of all flesh—to Madame Tussaud's !



*"Beacon," not "Beckon"*

"Not Beconsfield, but Beaconsfield."

By one of life's little ironies, in giving up the mispronounced name Disraeli, a name by which his race was to be "for ever recognised," he alighted on a title that, in sound, was equally equivocal. In common with most of his countrymen, Lord Rosebery spoke of *Beconsfield* (and indeed old maps, no less than the local and general pronunciation, have it *Bekonsfield* and *Becensfield*, in allusion to beeches and not to beacons) when he was thus corrected by the husband of Lady Beaconsfield, she herself joining in. "I assure you," Lord Rosebery has said, "I was impressed by those persons with a creed which will leave me only with life, that the pronunciation is *Beaconsfield*, not *Beconsfield*; and it would afterwards have required more courage than I possess to address Lady Beaconsfield as Lady Beconsfield or Lord Beaconsfield as Lord Beconsfield."



*The Ruling Passion*

"Statesmanship inspires interest longer than most things. I have seen Metternich in love: some

thought it sublime : I thought it absurd. But I felt the greatest reverence for him as a statesman to the last."

Metternich, the Austrian Premier, sought refuge here from the Revolution of 1848, and took up his abode on Richmond Green, in what Disraeli thought 'the most charming house in the world.' "It was called the Old Palace," and had "a long library, gardens, everything worthy of him. I am enchanted with Richmond Green which, strange to say, I don't recollect ever having visited before, often as I have been to Richmond. I should like to let my house and live there. It is still and sweet, charming alike in summer and winter." In October, 1849, Disraeli received from Metternich "a beautiful and affecting farewell letter in time to embrace him exactly half an hour before he left England."

The Metternichs' stay at Richmond was not without an influence on the Disraelis ; for, in consequence of her brother's enthusiasm, Miss Sara Disraeli settled in the neighbourhood.

"Your villa is in the heart of the greenland which I have so long admired and wished to dwell in. I think you will be very happy there," Disraeli wrote in 1850, "and I shall probably end my days as your neighbour."

## *Race and the Races*

"The British aristocracy, which the multitude idealises, does not idealise, does not even realise, its own status and dignity. The only race<sup>1</sup> your typical noble reflects upon is that run by horses ; pedigree and high breeding are concerns only of cattle ; his course of study is the racecourse ; and the highest homage he offers to the Church is to call a chase after the steeple. His ken is bounded by his kennels ; and his vision of England's activities is regulated by the number of his tenants willing to be puppy-walkers. And all this with candour. For in country-house charades I notice that the housemaid's part is coveted by all the ladies, while each of the sons competes for that of the groom. And their table-talk is stable-talk."

Life in a country house was otherwise described by him as "a series of meals, mitigated by the new dresses of the ladies."

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"I am not disposed for a moment to admit that my pedigree is not as good as that of the Cavendishes."

This was a saying of Disraeli's during the Bucks election of 1847, when a member of the House of Cavendish was also a candidate.

<sup>1</sup> "Race," on the contrary, Disraeli held, "is the key of history." In this mood he went so far as to say: "Progress and reaction are but words to mystify the million. In the structure, the decay, and the development of the various families of man, the vicissitudes of history find their main solution: all is race."



The great Whig families—an oligarchy he called them, with memories of his Venetian ancestry—had barred his way to Parliament when he was a young man with “no connexions.” His own descent, he hints elsewhere, is from Abraham. But a Grey (his opponent on his first hustings was a son of the Prime Minister)—a Grey too can trace, in a general way, back to Adam. That is the weak as well as the strong point of all pedigree-mongering ; and Disraeli, in emphasising descent in the instance of Jews, Arabs, Spanish grandees, and the rest, did so, less to glorify them, than to humble the haughty of our Island, our “mushroom aristocracy,” as he calls it. Families who date back a few hundred years in our Island history shrank beneath this larger range of vision when Disraeli the cosmopolitan measured men by universal rather than local standards ; and, thinking of Roman families who were great when Cæsar conquered Briton, but when the ancestors of the Stanleys were woad-painted savages, closed Debrett, after studying it for what it was worth, with a shrug of the shoulders and a reflection. If Stanley, with a recorded ancestor of a thousand years ago, was to be set above a Lord Mowbray (of Dizzy’s own creation in *Sybil*), with a recorded ancestor of only a century or two ago, how much above a Stanley must be set an Oriental with a recorded ancestry of, say, two thousand years. Yet a Stanley thought nothing of a

Fakredeem. The deduction may be either one of two : it may level up or may level down. With many a slash, here at the family tree, there at the national hedge that encloses and stifles it, Disraeli was still indulging his old hobby—a detestation of the Whigs. No doubt it was his want of success in destroying at the polls the prestige of the Whig families that made him scrutinise their credentials, and banter those who were swayed by them : a Jack Straw might be hanged, he said (with a finger turned to Lord John Russell), while a Lord John Straw became a Minister in England.

*Vivian Grey* did not consider these things : but between the date of that book and the date of *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and the rest, Disraeli had unsuccessfully measured his strength, as man to man, against that of Colonel Grey, Lord Grey's third son, remembered now by what he later became—Queen Victoria's secretary and the editor of *The Early Life of the Prince Consort*.

"Ancient lineage," said Millbank, taking the phrase from Coningsby's lips—"I never heard of a peer with an ancient lineage. The real old families of this country are to be found among the peasantry"—(Mr. Thomas Hardy has at least one personal note in his novels in harmony with Disraeli's) ; "the gentry too may lay some claim to old blood. But a peer with an ancient lineage is to me quite a novelty. No, no ; the thirty years of the Wars of the Roses freed

us from those gentlemen. I take it after the Battle of Tewkesbury a baron was almost as rare a being in England as a wolf."

And when Coningsby self-defendingly says: "I have always understood that our peerage was the finest in Europe," that ninepin is put up for the pleasure of Disraeli in knocking it down.

"From themselves," said Mr. Millbank, "and the heralds they pay to paint their carriages? But I go to facts. When Henry VII. called his first Parliament, there were only twenty-nine temporal peers to be found, and even some of these took their seats illegally, for they had been attainted. Of those twenty-nine not five remain, and they, as the Howards for instance, are not Norman nobility. We owe the English peerage to three sources: the spoliation of the Church; the open and flagrant sale of honours by the elder Stuarts; and the borough-mongering of our own times. Those are the three main sources of the existing peerage of England, and, in my opinion, disgraceful ones."

And again: "They adopted Norman manners" (one recalls "Batavian grace") "while they usurped Norman titles," without either Norman rights or Norman duties, for "They did not conquer the land, nor do they defend it." *Sybil* tells the same tale, and gives it in one sentence a new turn: "There is no longer, in fact, an aristocracy in England, for the superiority of the animal is an essential quality of aristocracy."

*Grace and their Graces*

To Cardinal Manning :

"Yes, I believe in grace as I believe in fortune ; and that we get just as much as we have earned for ourselves in past existences, or as others have earned for us in past eras. Is not our theory of an hereditary monarchy and Upper House of Parliament in some blind popular way a witness to this belief ? The Church has her apostolic procession : the world its hereditary honours : each conferred out of the storehouse of the past. And I always have that idea at the back of my mind when I say 'Your Grace' to a duke !"

*Of Men and Books*

To an author, presenting an impossible book :

"Many thanks : I shall lose no time in reading it."

This ambiguity, fathered upon Disraeli, might very well be his ; and if there is as little evidence of the paternity as that which sometimes satisfies a magistrate of sentiment, we can say "*Ben trovato*" in all truth. For clean neatness the phrase has the advantage of that formula which Oliver Wendell Holmes puts into the mouth of "the Master," who, after a few flattering adjectives about a presentation volume, added : "I am lying under a sense of obligation."

To Henry Cowper :

"I delight in *Pride and Prejudice*, and have read it seventeen times."

Who would question the simple second-decade figure of a Chancellor of the Exchequer ? Anyway, if he read the book seven times, he made amends, say, for Charlotte Brontë's failure to have read it even once when she wrote her criticisms of Jane Austen. The doctrine of the Church which credits the superfluous merits of the saints to the account of repentant sinners has its comforting application to the reading of good works of fiction ; so that whenever I meet a friend, whose literary soul is my solicitude, and who has not read *Prince Otto*, or has read it only once perfunctorily, I go home and read it yet again, offering vicariously my friend's homage to the ghost of Stevenson, and never wearying in that work of supererogation.

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"They think it the Battle of Armageddon ; let us go to lunch."

This he said to a congenial friend, a poet, after a crucial division at the club on some exciting trifle of internal politics.

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After reading Coventry Patmore's Anti-Reform Bill

lines beginning "When the false English nobles and their Jew."

"I collapse. If the poets are against me, I give up; for behind the poets are ranged the young men.<sup>1</sup> Yet the main difference between this mystic and myself is one of Islands. I live in Britain; Patmore in Patmos."

Mr. Coventry Patmore's father also had been a severe critic of Disraeli forty years earlier—see his hostile notice of *Contarini Fleming* in the *Court Circular*. Beckford's praise of the book was a compensation at the time (May, 1832): "This really consoles me for Mr. Patmore." If Mr. Coventry Patmore had no liking for the Liberalism of Disraeli, words falter before any description of his detestation of Mr. Gladstone's. I remember that when I was a guest of the poet at the Manor House, Hastings, a visit of Mr. Gladstone to the town was bruited abroad; whereupon the Patmore servants were, with grim humour, forbidden to go into the tainted streets where they might encounter the leper of politics. When Patmore was the last opponent left of "popular government" in England, he made the best of a bad job, and had such consolation as is expressed in a little verse,

<sup>1</sup> "Poets," says one of his characters, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

addressed to a lady who permits me the privilege of putting it into print :

To — (SEEKING TO MAKE ME A RADICAL).

Dear, either's creed one hope foretells ;

Mine waits ; yours, kindlier, hastens.

But what to us are principles

Who are one in Tory tastes ?

Bear in your hat what badge you may—

The Red Republic's even—

So all your lovely ways obey

The Monarchy of Heaven.

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To Sir William Fraser, who had lost his seat in Parliament (in 1853).

“You have now but one thing left in life—a course of Balzac.”

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From Sir William Fraser's *Disraeli and his Day* :  
 “I was the last person with whom Disraeli conversed in the Carlton Club. He seldom came there. I on that day went up to speak to him—a thing I rarely did. He was standing in the middle of the morning-room, looking vacantly around ; I said to him : ‘I know you wish some one to speak to you.’ He said : ‘I am very much obliged to you. I am so blind ; I come here ; I look round ; I see no one ; I go away.’ I said to him : ‘You told me many years ago, when I first lost my seat, that I ought to go through a course of Balzac. I have been very ill lately ; I have

been going through a course of Beaconsfield.' He paused a moment, to consider what he should say that was civil; and then: 'I am glad to have had so appreciative a reader.' I said: 'I hope you have got a good sum for the last edition.' 'Which is that?' 'A very gorgeous one; in brown cloth, gilt: called "The Beaconsfield Edition."' 'I must inquire about that.' 'I should have liked very much to have gone through the characters of your early novels with you; but I never liked to trouble you.' 'They were not portraits: they were photographs.' 'Pardon me, but surely they were not photographs which gave every trait of the individual; they were idealised portraits.' 'Yes, you are quite right: that is the correct term—idealised portraits.' 'There is a man in this room at this moment whom you mention by name in the first chapter of *Vivian Grey*.' 'Is there?' said Disraeli in a deep voice, looking round. 'Where?' 'That fat man, with a red face, fast asleep in the armchair.' Disraeli gazed at the individual, and then said: 'Who is he?' 'His name is Appleyard.' Disraeli uttered one of those oracular and depreciatory grunts which were frequent with him when he wished not to express an articulate opinion."

Sir William Fraser, whose jestings were not always convenient as to time, subject, or place, and whose executor found himself burdened with unbargained-



for responsibilities, then proceeded to tell Lord Beaconsfield a story that was broad as well as long—two intrusions that Disraeli hated. *A propos*, another member of the Carlton Club, who knew Disraeli well, writes to me : “The Chief never told a vulgar story in his life, and always shuffled nervously when he had—as of course he often had—to hear one. He was no prude ; but dirty puddles had no hold on one whose mental vision was that of a clean sea. He loathed levity about the only serious and mysterious thing we really know—the Body. He faced the facts of life, physiological and spiritual, gravely, I had almost said sorrowfully ; he faced them compassionately. I have seen him manœuvre and dodge to escape bores, but particularly dirty bores. As in his writings, so in his conversation, he was without spot and without reproach. You had not the feeling that he was fighting his nature and flattering his conscience by his correctness. You felt instinctively that nothing else was worth his while.”

That, however, was not Sir William Fraser's appreciation. There were some things beyond his view—even the simplest working of the law of cause and effect ; after that conversation Lord Beaconsfield came to the club no more.

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At a house-party at the Duke of Bedford's at Woburn in the late 'seventies, Dr. Jowett, who was

of the company, and who had at least a Benjamin in common with his fellow-guest, reports that Disraeli "regretted the new translation of the Scriptures, which could have no authority and would disturb many consecrated phrases; but thought very highly of Renan's *Evangelies*, and praised his book on Solomon's Song. Wished for a new book on Ecclesiastes. He told Mr. Cowper that he first turned his thoughts to politics when in quarantine at Malta for forty-two days. The Consul had sent him two years' *Galignani's* to read, and from that time he began to understand politics."

Details in nearly all such reported conversation fail in accuracy when tested. Disraeli was in Gibraltar August 9th, 1830, and wrote thence to his sister "Sa," thanking her for her "most welcome" and "most sweet" letter, and saying that "the Mediterranean packet is hourly expected." By it he went to Malta, writing thence to his father from the lazarette on August 25: "We are free to-morrow." The journey and the quarantine together took, therefore, only seventeen days. He had then been only two months away from home, and two months' *Galignani's*, rather than two years', was probably the Consul's allowance; particularly as Disraeli had been an eager newspaper reader at home, and had written a few days earlier from Gibraltar, "I see all newspapers sooner or later." He does not, in his detailed letters, mention

any new light on public affairs as having come to him in his few days' detention, and his "understanding" of English politics had been already exhibited in the pages of *Vivian Grey*. At each important stage of his journey, where newspapers met him, he eagerly read the arrears. From Athens towards the close of this year (1830) he wrote : "I have just got a pile of papers" ; from Constantinople in the January following : "I have just got through a pile of *Galignani's*" ; from Cairo, on the last day of May, 1831, he exclaims over "the wonderful news" (about the Reform movement) "which meets me here in a pile of *Galignani's*"—the most exciting budget that he ever received, and one to which he might very probably make allusions long afterwards in his talk, though not in the sense reported here.

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Asked at a dinner-party if he had read *Daniel Deronda* :

"When I want to read a novel, I write one."

\*\*\*

A clergyman, having bungled into Lady Howard's garden-party at Craven Cottage, Fulham, instead of the Bishop of London's next door, lingered in the mundane crowd. Disraeli said :

"Obviously a casuist. Having come in by error he feels no obligation to retire."

Craven Cottage had interesting Disraeli associations. It is introduced by name into the pages of *Tancred*. Thither goes the hero to his first breakfast with Mrs. Guy Flouncey :

"He rather liked it. The scene, lawns and groves, and a glancing river, the music, our beautiful country-women, who with their brilliant complexions and bright bonnets do not shrink from daylight, make a morning festival very agreeable, even if one be dreaming of Jerusalem."

Craven Cottage was the creation of the Margravine of Anspach when married to Lord Craven. After them came Bulwer, who describes it in *Ernest Maltravers*. Indeed, that book, and its sequel, *Alice*, were written within its narrow country-in-town enclosures.

\*\*\*

To Sir William Harcourt (at Hughenden) :

"The literary movement has left me behind. I learn from two young men who came here from Oxford the other day that Byron is no longer regarded for his poetry, only for his sublimity of soul."

If Disraeli did not, like Tennyson, go out and cut on a tree "Byron is dead," he none the less came within the glamour of that Byron's influence and

legend which was a reaction from the convention, the stodginess, the mock modesty, which Byron's reckless candour brushed away. If he, too, canted, he canted against cant. With all his failings he was a deliverer ; and this perhaps is what Young Oxford meant to say. Disraeli, in *Venetia*, where he makes him a sort of wayward idol, shows how strong a hold Byron had over his imagination—over the imagination of all that generation. And, years earlier, in *Vivian Grey*, he had put into the mouth of Cleveland this estimate :

“If anything were more characteristic of Byron's mind than another, it was his strong, shrewd common-sense, his pure unalloyed sagacity. The loss of Byron can never be retrieved. He was indeed a real man ; and when I say this, I award him the most splendid character which human nature need aspire to. At least I, for my part, have no desire to be considered either a divinity or an angel ; and truly, when I look round upon the creatures alike effeminate in mind and body of which the world is, in general, composed, I fear that even that ambition is too exalted. Byron's mind was, like his own ocean, sublime in its yeasty madness, beautiful in its glittering summer brightness, mighty in the lone magnificence of its waste of waters, gazed upon from the magic of its own nature ; yet capable of representing, but as in a glass darkly, the natures of all others.”

Moreover, in *Coningsby* Byron is labelled "greater even as a man than as a writer." This surely must have been the very send-off of that movement which he said left him behind when he heard Young Oxford re-echoing Disraeli the Younger.

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To the guests at country-houses as a mild catch :

"Who wrote

Small by degrees, and beautifully less?"

Few replied Prior; and fewer pointed out the substitution of "small" for the "fine" of the poet. John, seventh Duke of Rutland, says: "I remember perfectly fifty years ago Disraeli put that question at my father's house at Belvoir and floored us all."

\*\*\*

To Sir William Fraser, who tried to draw him about caricatures and their effects on a man's public life:

"In these days every one's object is to be made ridiculous."

\*\*\*

"We live by admiration" less than by advertising. Even a minister who delivers a speech or an author who produces a novel must take the consequence of his name's access of notoriety. After the issue of *Endymion*, Lord Beaconsfield said to a friend:

"It is a strange thing, but acquaintances keep

calling at the house and asking after me, as if I had had a baby."

\*\*\*

He said in his later and very lonely days :

"My friends send me many books. I don't know which profit me most—those that keep me awake at night or those that send me to sleep."



### *In the Household*

A secretary sharply scolded a servant in the presence of Lord Beaconsfield, who, when the servant had withdrawn, shrugged deprecating shoulders. "Oh, but he is such an idiot" pleaded the secretary.

Lord B. : "Has it never occurred to you that if he was not an idiot he would not be a servant ?"

\*\*\*

To Henry Cowper, at Woburn, Disraeli said of one of Captain Burnaby's books that he could not forgive its wretched sketch of English servants abroad.

"Ah," said Cowper, "he did not manage that so well as you did in *Tancred*."

"I see," was the reply, "that you have lately been reading that work. I myself am in the habit of recurring to it, when I wish to renew my knowledge of the East."

Those servants in *Tancred* are numbered among our friends. Freeman and Trueman had been told

off with Roby and the rest to accompany Tancred, Lord Montacute, to Palestine. For them, indeed, the West was West and the East was East—they took their national prejudices as well as their forks with them; and Disraeli in his sallies recognises that they are kith and kin with all their race:

“‘And the most curious thing,’ said Freeman to Trueman, as they established themselves under a pine-tree, with an ample portion of roast meat, and armed with their travelling knives and forks—‘and the most curious thing is, that they say these people are Christians. Who ever heard of Christians wearing turbans?’ ‘Or eating without knives and forks?’ added Trueman.”

And then Disraeli thrusts at the tourist’s self-complacency in ignorance:

“‘It would astonish their weak minds in the steward’s room at Bellamont, if they could see all this, John,’ said Mr. Freeman pensively. ‘A man who travels has very great advantages.’ ‘And very great hardships too,’ said Trueman. ‘I don’t care for work, but I do like to have my meals regular.’ ‘You are thinking if anything were to happen to either of us in this heathen land, where we should get Christian burial?’ ‘Lord love you, Mr. Freeman, no I wasn’t. I was thinking of a glass of ale.’ ‘One wants consolation, John,



sometimes—one does, indeed ; and, for my part, I do miss the family prayers and the home-brewed.’ ”

Again the faithful retainers, seeing Lord Montacute’s devotion to an Eastern lady and an Eastern chief, re-echo the set opinions of the classes ; nor does Disraeli fail of one shaft directed against the legislature itself :

“ ‘ It is much better than monks and hermits [Freeman says], and low people of that sort, who are not by no means fit company for somebody I could mention, and might turn him into a papist into the bargain.’ ‘ That would be a bad business,’ said Trueman ; ‘ my lady could never abide that. It would be better that he should turn Turk.’ ‘ I am not sure it wouldn’t,’ said Mr. Freeman. ‘ It would be in a manner more constitutional. The Sultan of Turkey may send an Ambassador to our Queen, but the Pope of Rome may not.’ ”



#### *At Hughenden Church*

“ This Hughenden parish is torn in two by dissensions. There is civil war between those who support the open alms-plate and those who support the closed bag.”

So he said to Sir William Harcourt when that young politician, who had entered Parliament in order to slay him, became his guest. On the way to church



*Photo by H. W. Tamm & Co., Oxford.*

111 CHURCH AT HUGGENDEN.

Showing the Danish vault, beneath the window on the right.



on Sunday the host (whose sympathies with the Public Worship Regulation Bill were also Harcourt's) warned his companion that echoes of the High Church controversy had penetrated even that sylvan retreat.

"My friend the vicar," said the Lord of the Manor, "will take what I call a collection and he calls an offertory, and it will be placed on what he calls an altar but on what the churchwardens call a table."

But Disraeli was not always a mere onlooker at the rites and ceremonies of his parish church. When he died, the vicar, the Rev. H. Blagden, paid him public tribute for his private pieties: "Have we not here watched him, even when at the height of his prosperity and power, coming down, simply and humbly, Sunday after Sunday, to take his place among us and worship God? Do we not remember how we knelt side by side with him, only on Christmas Day last at your altar, where he received from my hands the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ?"



### *In Harness*

"How do you contrive to retain your youthful appearance and health?"

The question was put in the street by Lord Beaconsfield to a former colleague, who had retired from public life. "By enjoying all the repose I can," was

the recipe advertised by the rubicund friend. Lord Beaconsfield's reply was a snort :

"Repose ! good Heavens, repose !" he exclaimed, as of a thing impossible in his case, if not absolutely cowardly.



*"Gone up"*

To Lord Aberdare, who met Lord Beaconsfield in the precincts of the House of Lords shortly after he had taken his peerage, and who asked him how he liked it :

"Well, I feel that I am dead, but in the Elysian fields."



### *Impressions and Portraits*

"After the Cabinet, the Household."

The saying was quoted as Disraeli's by politicians who were not Under-secretaries themselves, and therefore perhaps not unwilling to minimise the importance of those who were.

\*\*\*

Of a member of the Government who absented himself from a division :

"This won't do ; he has taken the Queen's shilling ! "

He himself was, of all members and ministers, one

of the most patiently punctual and persevering in attendance at debates, committees, and councils.

\*\*\*

Of Sir James Graham and Sir John Pakington, of whom somebody said to him that their noses had a judicial look :

“ Yes, quarter sessions and petty sessions.”

So far back as in 1838, when Sir John Pakington (afterwards “ sent up ”—which is sometimes very like being “ sent down ”—as Lord Hampton) made his maiden speech, Disraeli saw instantly the sessions simile. Pakington, on that occasion, sat next to Disraeli—the Disraeli who had been obliged to desist when making his own *début*, and who thus passed judgment on his apparently more successful neighbour, made perforce his neighbour again, on a future Treasury Bench, no other clay being at hand to put into shape :

“ Pakington’s friends expected a great deal from him, and they announce that he quite fulfilled their expectations. He was confident, fluent, and commonplace, and made a good chairman of quarter sessions speech. ‘ It was the best speech that he ever will make,’ said Sugden, ‘ and he has been practising it before the grand jury for the last twenty years.’ However, I supported him very zealously, and he went to bed thinking he was an orator, and

wrote to Mrs. Pakington, I've no doubt, to that effect."

All dull men do not belong to one side of the House—the House would have to be enlarged, perhaps doubled, if they did. To Sir James Graham, here linked with Pakington, though politically severed, Disraeli was introduced in 1836 at a dinner where they and Peel were fellow-guests of Lord Chandos, and where Disraeli (within one year of his senatorship) was the only man not in Parliament. Once he got there, sparring began; and it was a reference made by Disraeli, during his first tenure of office as Chancellor of Exchequer in 1852, to Sir James Graham as a politician whom "I will not say I greatly respect, but whom rather I greatly regard," that brought the literal Gladstone to his feet with an indignant rebuke: "I must tell the right honourable gentleman that he is not entitled to say to my right honourable friend the member for Carlisle that he regards him but that he does not respect him. I must tell the right honourable gentleman that whatever he has learned—and he has learned much—he has not yet learned the limits of discretion, of moderation, and of forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every member of this House, the disregard of which is an offence in the meanest among us, but is of tenfold weight when committed by the

Leader of the House of Commons." Surely above the accessory cheers that greeted these words from the one side and the derisive but equally regular cries of derision from the other, the inner ear could hear Homeric laughter of gods at the Parliamentary tactics of the Islanders.

One element of the natural regard Disraeli felt for the politician whom he could not respect may be sought perhaps altogether apart from the life of the legislature. Disraeli's great liking for the three Sheridan sisters, Lady Seymour, Mrs. Norton, and Mrs. Blackwood, is noted on another page; and Graham was their uncle—the most "respectable" member of the family, they would have said. How often are Parliamentary manners softened by the relations between men and the women of their foes! If gentlemen of the House ever pay that homage to absent beauty, nameless where all else is brawled, the return is silently made. Diana of the Crossways chose her home at Westminster by the woman's instinct to be near a massed masculinity:—that Diana who nevertheless declared, in a cry of personal anguish: "A woman in the pillory restores the original bark of brotherhood to mankind."

\*\*\*

To a colleague, who, when staying at Hughenden, proposed a walk:

"A walk—impossible: a saunter, if you please."



Lord Eldon, years before, had died regretting three errors—the first of which was that he had once walked where he might have ridden. Mr. Chamberlain, after Disraeli, avoids walking any distance—further, let us say, than across the floor of the House of Commons.

Nevertheless when Lord Stanley (afterwards head of the Derby-Disraeli Administration) paid his first visit to Hughenden in January, 1851 (not a good sauntering month, certainly), Disraeli's own record is as follows :

“Stanley's visit to Hughenden was very agreeable. Having no horses”—a proviso which might mollify even a Lord Eldon—“we took long walks together—one day to Hampden ; another to the Abbey. The view of Hughenden across the heights is quite marvellous. I had never seen it before. We walked to Denver Hill and its sylvan neighbourhood ; and on Sunday, after church, we walked on the hills in view of Dashwood's Park, till we got to Westcombe Church.”

Disraeli had then for three years been the unexploring owner of Hughenden.

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A favourite sentiment of Disraeli's in middle life, reported by many friends in slightly varying phrases, but best remembered in the form addressed to his sister when Lord Stanley in 1851 failed (through faint-heartedness) to form a Government :

"We cannot complain of fortune : only of our inveterate imbecility which could not avail itself of her abundant favours."

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To a friend who congratulated him on his first Premiership :

"Yes I have climbed to the top of the greasy pole."

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"When members of Parliament cease to be gentlemen, England will cease to be an Empire."

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Conversing with Lord Ronald Gower (whom he called "dearest" over a cigarette at Hughenden), he placed among happiest things "one of those long midsummer days when one dines at nine o'clock." To Lord Ronald Gower it was that he said of certain grave colleagues who took life a little too literally :

"Mr. W. H.—or is it Mr. H. W.?—Smith" (memorable Benjamin!), "or Mr. Secretary Cross, whom I always forget to call Sir Richard."

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"He wears his eyeglass like a gentleman." /

This, according to Lobby gossip, was Disraeli's unimpassioned comment on the first Parliamentary speech of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had newly come from Birmingham with denunciation of Disraeli upon his

lips. Disraeli's estimate of one of their number was characteristically a much kinder one than Cardinal Newman had made upon the Golden Youth of Birmingham in general. Dives, said the preacher in effect, was a fine gentleman, but, nevertheless, was excluded from heaven :

“ This was the fate of your pattern and idol, O ye, if any of you be present, young men who, though not possessed of wealth and rank, yet affect the fashions of those who have them. You, my brethren, have not been born splendidly or nobly ; you have not been brought up in the seats of liberal education ; you have no high connexions ; you have not learned the manners nor caught the tone of good society ; you have no share of the largeness of mind, the candour, the romantic sense of honour, the correctness of taste, the consideration for others, and the gentleness which the world puts forth as its highest type of excellence ; you have not come near the courts or the mansions of the great ; yet you ape the sin of Dives, while you are strangers to his refinement. You think it the sign of a gentleman to set yourselves above religion, to criticise the religions and professors of religion, to look at Catholic and Methodist with impartial contempt, to gain a smattering of knowledge on a number of subjects, to dip into a number of frivolous publications, if they are popular, to have read the latest novel, to have heard the singer and

seen the actor of the day, to be well up with the news, to know the names and, if so be, the persons of public men, to be able to bow to them, to walk up and down the street with your heads on high, and to stare at whatever meets you ;—and to say and do worse things of which these outward extravagances are but the symbol. And this is what you conceive you have come upon earth for ! The Creator made you, it seems, O my children, for this work and office, to be a bad imitation of polished ungodliness, to be a piece of tawdry and faded finery, or a scent which has lost its freshness and does but offend the sense ! ”

If Disraeli, an observer of Newman from of old, had read this passage, a point is supplied to the saying, “ *He wears his eyeglass like a gentleman.* ”

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To his wife, when disappointed by a Liberal Premier’s refusal to shorten the Easter and lengthen the Whitsuntide holidays :

“ My dear, what can we expect from a Government that is not in society ? ”

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“ I have a new phrase for Harcourt. ”

So, towards the end of his life, said Disraeli, and said no more. The phrase died with him ; and we must continue to associate the “ Hortensius ” of *Endymion* and the “ Rhodian ” combatant in Parlia-

mentary debate, with the man for whom all Dizzyites (following Dizzy here too) own a particular kindness, since, having gone out to slay Goliath, he sat instead in his tent, and admiringly measured him.

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"Love has many long words in its vocabulary: I have used them myself in *Henrietta Temple* and elsewhere. But there are two short words that are often missing from it; and their absence makes all the others meaningless—the prosaic words, 'here' and 'now.' Eloquence, both in love and in politics, is often an excess of manner to cover a defect of matter—the silver cover that conceals the empty dish."

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"There are fools and there are d——d fools"

—a nice (and a nasty) distinction. Lord Robert Montagu, one of the younger sons whom Disraeli tried to encourage with minor administrative posts, called forth the convenient classification that leaves too little doubt as to the denomination in which he himself was ranged. "He is worse than a silly fool, he is a clever one," was Disraeli's definition on another occasion. Lord Robert's life had been one long provocation. He provoked his Anglican friends and lost his Huntingdonshire seat in Parliament by becoming a Catholic; then he returned to the House (where he had sat as a Tory) as an Irish member and a Home Ruler; then, again, his seat at the Oratory

and in Parliament were alike vacated ; and, after having defended the Temporal Power as an all but divine appanage of the Papacy, he wrote pamphlets to prove that the Pope was the Man of Sin and Manning a son of per- and se-dition. Even Disraeli's tolerance faltered before a union of violence and vacillation.

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After the Colenso controversy, the battle of Isandula, and the death of the Prince Imperial :

"The Zulus are a wonderful people ; they defeat our generals, they convert our bishops, and they affix 'finis' to the fortunes of a French dynasty."

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Of a certain Lord Chancellor :

"Everybody knows the stages of a lawyer's career—he tries in turn to get on, to get honours, to get honest. This one edits hymns instead of briefs, and, beginning by cozening juries, he compounds with heaven by cramming children in a Sunday school."

Disraeli, as is elsewhere indicated, was not a lover of lawyers.

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To an objectionable person's invitation, Disraeli began his refusal "Dear Sir." His secretary pointed out that this formalism would come unflatteringly to one who was of great importance in a certain county :

"D—— the county !" said Disraeli.

As a last futile effort the secretary said : " But he is important to the party."

" D—— the party ! " said Disraeli.

Janetta, Duchess of Rutland, writes : " Though so kind, he knew there were occasions when the truest proof of real kindness was to maintain his own views. No consideration would induce him to concede a point that, in his estimation, ought not to be yielded."

\*\*\*

Of Sir Charles Dilke, after his Republican speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne :

" A future Conservative Prime Minister."

Sir Charles was then the leader of a little constellation of politicians, called by somebody " the Dilky way." " The stars, which are the brain of heaven " one remembers, in this connexion, that Mr. George Meredith somewhere says. One can say no more of this than that Disraeli's prophesies, even the unlikeliest, have the unusual habit of coming true.

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A member of his Administration (Lord Bury, afterwards Earl of Albemarle) went to the Prime Minister in fear and trembling to confess that he had joined the Church of Rome. He began by saying that a difficulty had arisen, quite unconnected with politics, and that he was afraid it meant party embarrassment,

and that he therefore placed his resignation in his leader's hands.

Lord Beaconsfield, laconically : " A lady ? "

" Well, if you like—the Scarlet Lady. I have become a Catholic."

Lord Beaconsfield : " But how *very* convenient. A relative of mine has just taken the same step ; and now you can tell me, what was terribly puzzling me, the appropriate thing to say in congratulation."

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To a friend who showed him at the Grosvenor Gallery Watts's portrait of Swinburne :

" What is this youthful version of an unregenerate Duke of Argyll ? "

The allusion was to the eighth Duke of Argyll.

\*\*\*

On seeing Lord Hartington yawn during his maiden speech :

" He'll do."

Perhaps this gave the hint to the witty authors of *Wisdom While you Wait*. For when the *Inside-completuar Britanmaware* was thrust on Devonshire House, the Duchess implored : " Be so good as to send for the volumes at once : we find it impossible to keep the Duke awake."

So much for a jest. But the collector of Disraeliana



has a grave tribute to pay to this always fair and honourable opponent of Disraeli—the St. Aldegonde of *Lothair*, drawn by Disraeli with no unfriendly hand. Amid the hurricane of reproaches that fell upon the Queen's Favourite Minister during the Midlothian campaign, one voice was raised, if only to be drowned, in the surrounding clamour. That voice was Lord Hartington's.

"No one can justly attribute any mean or unworthy motives to Lord Beaconsfield. I firmly believe that he has had in view what he believes to be the greatness of his country and the power of the Sovereign whom he serves."

These words, spoken towards the close of the General Election of 1880, when it was already clear that the Tory party was worsted, shall pass down to history in high contrast with those of most of the Liberal candidates of the day. The gratitude of two persons that speaker instantly won—Disraeli's own and that of the Queen, who—let it be noted, as it should be, in this connexion—subsequently wished that Lord Hartington, not Mr. Gladstone, should form the Administration that was to follow.

Writing to me more than twenty years after the utterance of these just and, under the conditions, generous words, the Duke of Devonshire (July, 1903) says: "Nothing that has since happened or become known has induced me to alter in any

degree the opinion which I then expressed of Lord Beaconsfield's political character and aims."

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Of a member who brought forward a yearly anti-Popery motion :

"For years this man has been a bore ; he has now become an institution."

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Disraeli's apologetic comment when a statesman, who was also a man of many asperities, became a Knight of the Thistle, and was under smoking-room criticism :

"He is a Thistle ; and yet unreasoning people are disappointed that they do not gather figs."

Similarly, in earlier years Disraeli had said of a pamphlet by his impetuous adversary, Roebuck : "Crab-apples grow upon crab-trees, and the meagre and acid mind produces the meagre and acid pamphlet."

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To a Princess of impulsive patriotism (Mary of Cambridge), who, wishing the Government to make a move against Russia, said to the Prime Minister at a dinner-party, "I cannot imagine what you are waiting for" :

"Potatoes, at this moment, madam."

To Cardinal Manning :

"I say Tory. I do not say Conservative—it is too long a word."

\*\*\*

"I think you must be my Impresario."

In his reading of men, Disraeli was not only very accurate, but also very rapid ; and in one case at least a casual meeting of his in a country house with a man much his junior led to a long and close association. It was at Raby in the time of the last Duke of Cleveland ; and the album of the house contained a sentiment, put there in a happy couplet by Lord Bennet :

What a pity at Raby  
There isn't a baby.

And that, though not in a literal sense, was the opinion of the girls of the house-party one wet afternoon.

Sundays are dull in country houses : we have St. Aldegonde's word for it ; but wet week-days can be very dull too, within and without. On this particular afternoon—a very particular afternoon in the lives of two people—a group of young ladies insisted upon being amused ; and, having no actual baby in hand, they seized on a young man with a reputation for gravity and wisdom, and insisted on his becoming a juvenile for their sakes. He was to

organise charades ; and, first of all, was made to dance a break-down and to sing a comic song to the accompaniment of the rattle of his heels upon the floor. The very incongruity between the man and the fooling gave license to the fun. With simplicity—like that of the early follower of St. Francis who went on all fours to be a fool for Christ's sake, and let the pompous people sneer, yet added the *Stabat Mater* to the great poetry of the Church—he stooped to folly and raised mirth. In the midst of the frolic he looked up and saw the face of Disraeli in the doorway.

His first meeting with the Minister, the night before, had been an event in his life. The Minister had received him cordially, saying : "I had a great respect for your father." And now, on this afternoon, when he was supposed to have gone to his chamber for letter-writing, the Minister was witness of this farce ; and the willing yet unwilling performer heard in memory one sentence that choked his song : "I had a great respect for your father." "And what a fool he must think me !" was his reflection as he ceased at once his dance and shout with a deferential gesture towards the onlooker—always the onlooker. The girls, bent with laughter, cried out to him to go on ; and, yielding to their entreaties, he submitted to continue his performance. The Minister remained for another minute or two, his face betraying neither amusement nor vexation. Then he turned his back

on the revels and took refuge in his room. "He had a respect for my father, and what a fool he must think me !" was the improvised entertainer's haunting reflection for the rest of the tedious afternoon.

After dinner that evening, when the others passed out of the dining-room, Disraeli waited for the young man, now grave even beyond his custom. He expected one of two things—either to receive an admonition or to be treated with candour as a *farceur*. The Minister's hand was on his shoulder, and the words came: "I think you must be my Impresario." The Minister had seen in him one who was sensitive yet compliant ; he knew his man ; and the tie thus begun—perhaps the closest he had, except only that which marriage brought him—endured until the end.

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Coleridge, addressing a scoffing crowd at Bristol, said : " When on the burning embers of Democracy you throw the cold waters of reason, the result is a hiss." Disraeli, quoting this, declared to Bernal Osborne :

"That retort, made to an Athenian mob, would have prevailed ; and I would rather have been the author of it than of half my speeches."

\*\*\*

To Cardinal Manning, who said to him, " You have always venerated the Creeds, yet you are now praised in all the reviews of *Lothair* for that formula-annulling

levity : ' All sensible men are of one religion.' ' What is that ?' ' Sensible men never tell ' " :

" Oh, but that was surely the saying of a distinguished Bishop of your Church—Talleyrand ? "

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" Then we will make him Lord High Commissioner to the Church of Scotland."

This was said when Lord Rosslyn's claims for a Government recognition were under discussion, and when somebody said that he was a good swearer. Lord Rosslyn might have had the Mastership of the House or anything he liked had Disraeli foreseen his benefactions to mankind ; but they were still hidden in schoolroom or the nursery.



### *The "Gaiety" of Nations*

" Of course I am gratified—you know my tender feeling for all women."

Thus Disraeli to a lord-in-waiting, under rather whimsical circumstances, in the 'seventies, what time the Russian Bear was suspected of sharpening his claws. Princess Louise also happened to be crossing the seas to or from Canada. It was Sunday ; a breeze blew about Windsor Castle ; and the Queen expressed anxiety as to the state of winds and waves in mid-Atlantic. A lord-in-waiting said he knew a Fellow of the Royal Society, a weather-diviner, who would

give the word. He would go to get it, if her Majesty wished. Her Majesty did wish ; and she further entrusted her pursuivant with a message for Lord Beaconsfield. The lord-in-waiting was sent from the Professor's house to a supper of Gaiety girls, and there found him in this lively company, being himself constrained to listen to the game of words that was passing round. The problem for the ladies was : Which would they choose if they had to marry—Gladstone or Disraeli ? All elected Disraeli save one ; who was much frowned on by the company until she explained : " Gladstone, so that I might elope with Disraeli and break Gladstone's heart."

The lord-in-waiting, much diverted, went forth, and finding Disraeli in low spirits, told him this tale, as an instance of his great popularity with all classes. " I come," he said, " from the Queen, who holds you highest in the land, and from dancing-girls who adore you."

The whimsicality of the thing was congenial to Disraeli. " Of course I am gratified," he said, greatly comforted ; and next day showed that indeed he was. A Cabinet Council, summoned for noon, was kept waiting for the arrival of a minister—the Duke of Richmond, I believe. To pass the time, Disraeli told his assembled colleagues the story of the theatrical supper—just to show, he said, what unexpected friends they all had. Lord Cairns (*absit omen !*), hearing, did

not smile; and his solemnity put out of countenance the Prime Minister, who therefore made the continued absence of a colleague an excuse for postponing the Council for a couple of hours. The "balance of power" was then unstable as quicksilver; and that afternoon the papers had headings: "War Imminent: A Second Cabinet Council summoned." Wires throbbed under the tidings; the Stock Exchange shivered; the Paris Bourse sensitively responded; all Europe felt the thrill. The Gaiety girls (as the Minister reflected, and with no qualm), for the first and last time in their lives, through a chance association with him, had made history: their theatre was at last the "Gaiety" of nations.



### *Gladstoniana*

"What is the difference between a misfortune and a calamity?"—somebody asked a new definition from Disraeli. The questioner, being no literalist, but a man of liberal understanding, got the reply:

"Well, if Gladstone fell into the Thames, that would be a misfortune; and if anybody pulled him out, that, I suppose, would be a calamity."

\*\*\*

To Mr. Gladstone, who had remarked across the table of the House, "We were sincere in all we did":

"I never doubted your sincerity, only your ability."



This seems an echo of the old taunt he had addressed to a foe in early life: "I am bound to furnish my antagonists with arguments, but not with comprehension."

\*\*\*

Again across the table of the House of Commons to Mr. Gladstone, who had come to an involuntary pause:

"Your last word—'Revolution.'"

Canon MacColl, I should add, disputes this story, which he traces to a reminder once given by Disraeli to Gladstone that his last word was "satellites."

\*\*\*

"A man of splendid abilities, hampered by his Church liaisons."

This, to Mr. Espinasse, when Gladstone was still member for the University of Oxford. Gladstone, going to Lancashire, later made the admission: "Gentlemen, I stand before you unmuzzled."

\*\*\*

"Almost a statesman. Not redeemed by a single vice."

\*\*\*

On hearing that Mr. Gladstone was in excellent form as the guest of Lady Cowper at Wrest Park (November, 1879), Lord Beaconsfield, who was not above a pun, said:

"Doubtless he thinks that I, the wicked, will cease from troubling while he, the weary, is at Wrest."

\*\*\*

In a letter (still unpublished) addressed to a friend at the time of Gladstone's retirement from the Government, Lord Beaconsfield says he rejoices that "the casting out of evil spirits is not, after all, a thing of the past."

\*\*\*

"Gladstone treats the Queen like a public department—I treat her like a woman."



*The Primrose*

"My favourite primrose," said Lord Beaconsfield in 1878 to Dean Pigou.

It is, however, Queen Victoria's inscription, "His favourite flower," that has associated the primrose (in bloom at the time of his death) memorially with his name.



*The Faun*

"Let us go to the Faun."

One of the trees in the Green Park Lord Beaconsfield, in allusion to its suggestive shape, called "the Faun"; and in the early summer each year, during his later life, Lord Beaconsfield would say to Lord Rowton: "Let us go to the Faun." Casual passers-by wondered to see the Minister with his Secretary "worshipping" at

this sylvan shrine. ("I am not surprised that the ancients worshipped trees" is a phrase found in one of his latest letters.) Together they went, and, when one was taken, the survivor continued year after year his summer pilgrimage to that London-skirted shrine.



### *Habitations*

"It will see me out."

This he said when in 1880 he took a nine years' lease of the Curzon Street house in which, only nine months later, he died. It may be of service here to give such a register as it is now possible to make of the successive houses occupied by Disraeli in town—a list perhaps convenient to autograph collectors and others, sometimes puzzled by a hieroglyphic or a hasty capital letter to indicate the writer's whereabouts—such as "D. S." for Downing Street, "G. G." for Grosvenor Gate, "C. C." for the Carlton Club, and so forth.

1804-1817: 6, King's Road, Holborn, now (1903) Theobalds Road.

1817-1829: 6, Bloomsbury Square, often re-numbered in the interval, but again in 1887 restored to its old number, 6.

February, 1832 (after his return from prolonged travels), he describes himself as "comfortably located in Duke Street, St. James's."

May, 1835: 31A, Park Street, Grosvenor Square,



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NO. 19, CURZON STREET, MAYFAIR.

The house which was taken by Lord Berkeleysfield in 1880, and in which he died in 1887

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after sojourning at No. 3 in the same street as his father's guest for some months.

January, 1836 : 34, Upper Grosvenor Street.

1839-1872 : Grosvenor Gate (now 29, Park Lane).

1873 : 2, Whitehall Gardens, a delightful house, now worthily occupied by Messrs. A. Constable & Co.

1874 : 10, Downing Street.

1880 : After a brief tenancy in Charles Street, Grosvenor Square, he took the house in Curzon Street (No. 19) where, in the following Spring, more punctual to his word than he had expected, he passed away.



### *Compliments*

Lord Beaconsfield, while his title was still fresh, was surprised in the street by the bow of a lady whom he failed to recognise. "Who is she?" he asked of the companion on whose arm he leant. "Lady Sebright." Anxious to atone, he half turned round to the lady, who was half turning to him, and who then ran forward and said :

"How do you do, Mr. Disraeli? Oh, I beg pardon, Lord Beaconsfield."

"Of what use is my coronet to me, my dear lady, so long as Sir John is alive?"

Sir William Fraser's version is characteristic of Sir William Fraser. "On his first becoming Premier the

wife of Sir X. Y. stepped from her brougham in St. James's Street, and effusively said : ' You are at last in your right place, where you ought to be.' Disraeli, who could not have liked this open-air demonstration, at once replied : ' What is the good of it all, so long as Sir X. lives.' " Possibly the Tory member who recently quoted the story to me in illustration of Disraeli's humbug knew it only in the Fraser version. The authentic version supplies the otherwise missing motive—Disraeli's desire to make gallant amends for his first forgetfulness of the lady.

\*\*\*

A Chinese Ambassador, having expressed regret, through the Embassy interpreter, that he could not speak English, Disraeli said to the interpreter :

" Pray beg the Ambassador to remain in this country until I can speak Chinese."

Probably these were the same Chinese Ambassador and his interpreter whom Browning met at about this date. The interpreter said that his Excellency and the Englishman were brother poets. " Eh ? " said Browning, looking with new interest at the Celestial, doubly fathered by Phœbus,

" Giver of golden days and golden song."

" Yes," said the interpreter, " he writes enigmas."

" A brother indeed," cried Browning. But the

written story fails for lack of the laugh the poet laughed in the telling of it.

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On sitting beside Georgina, Lady Dudley, and seeing her hold out her arm :

“ Canova ! ”

Disraeli was in some moods a dealer in few words ; so that Lady Bulwer-Lytton, who introduces him under a thin disguise in one of her novels, makes him so much of an economist of words as to say “ Morning,” for “ Good morning.” He was of her husband’s friends ; therefore, the poor lady thought, none of hers ; so that when he sat in impressionable velvet upon a cane chair, she felt very happy in saying that “ he bore upon him the brand of Cain.”

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Towards the end of his life, Disraeli’s face had the almost comatose aspect which Millais has too painfully preserved ; and then Madame de Murrieta (Marquesa de Santurce) was one of the few people able by her inspiriting presence to rouse him from his lethargy. On the occasion of a Rothschild wedding where he and she were neighbours among the guests, she noticed with concern that the jewels and “ropes of pearls” among the wedding presents did not, as of old, kindle a light in the eye of Israel. He sat in an abstraction that bordered upon death. A



personage then approached the Marquesa, praised the precious stones, gorgeous as the Hebrew dreams of New Jerusalem, and added with gallantry : " But your eyes send them all into the shade."

" And call me out of the shades," interposed Lord Beaconsfield, with a sudden animation that made him what the experienced Marquesa said she had of old found him to be—the most finished and fastidious talker in town.



### *Diversions*

Disraeli was a fair hand at whist—a game in which he was sharpened by his early friend, Clay, who wrote a book about it. He is remembered at Lamington as playing with the daughters of the house ; and it was his custom to address to them little notes which he very irregularly threw across the table—a real diversion. For once he was a player with distractions. Lady Lamington's memory of him as a talker is that he was a man of moods : sometimes silent, but sometimes overflowing with anecdote, epigram, and hyperbole ; also that he was drawn out by women rather than by men. The late Mr. Christopher Sykes used to remark that whereas Gladstone good-naturedly overflowed to everybody, Disraeli talked as an opportunist—awaiting the favourable time and place and audience for the production of his good things. He himself somewhere has an agreeably ironic allusion to



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THE TARI OF WILSON SHOWS DILL'S THE BIVOUX HOUNDS, 1869.

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Kensington Gardens as a haunt where we not only polish our perorations, but "prepare our impromptus."

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Though an intrepid rider in youth, and a good shot, Disraeli knew his duty to the country, in a great sense, too well to make the hunting-field his arena. Perhaps he never taunted any sportsman among his followers as George II. once taunted a Duke of Grafton, with "spending all his time in tormenting a poor fox that was generally a much better beast than any of the brutes that pursued him." Nevertheless, one of his most satisfying triumphs was his success in persuading Lord George Bentinck to give up to Parliament and Protection the time he had devoted to his stables. As years advanced Disraeli's appearances in the field might be counted on five fingers. In 1853, when he was the guest of his great friend, Lord Galway, at Serlby, he was persuaded to go out fox-hunting. Three cheers were given by the tenant-farmers of Notts for their great advocate and friend. With Lord Wilton, too, he rode to hounds in 1869; and again won plaudits for the courage he showed in taking the saddle after long abstention—a sore experience it was to him very literally.

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During a visit in 1873 to Lamington, the Scottish seat of his former fellow Young Englander, Mr.

Baillie Cochrane (whom he sent to the Upper House as Lord Lamington), Disraeli was called upon to plant a conifer. He threw a shilling into the pit prepared for the planting, "To bring fortune to the family"—fortune which took the form of the second Lord Lamington's high ability to serve his country as Governor of Queensland. On the occasion of that planting, as Lady Lamington remembers, her big dog ran out, brushed against Disraeli and grazed his leg against a wall. He was already gouty, and that evening, as a result of the bruise, of which he made light at the moment, he was obliged to keep to his room.

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Lady Lamington's daughter, Constance, Countess De la Warr, remembers another rural scene, with the touch of Courts about it to endear it the more to the heart of Lord Beaconsfield. He was her guest at Buckhurst (her father, by an odd coincidence, had, long before her marriage, been accorded the name of Buckhurst in *Coningsby*) and there was a daily lunch in the woods. Once, as they sat down, the sylvan solitude was further disturbed. The jingle of harness, soft in the distance as Titania's bells, and unexpected as those horn-blasts which disturbed the Bavarian woodman's midnight dreams what time King Otto went a-hunting, was heard by the astonished party at luncheon. In reply to an exclamation of the hostess Disraeli explained: "It is a Queen's Messenger

in quest of me. Loving the incongruous, I gave instructions that he was to find me for State business in a forest." That Queen's Messenger seems to step straight into our midst from the pages of Disraelian romance. Other authors go to society for their episodes. Disraeli, for his own social inspirations, frequently went to his novels. He himself made his characters credible; for, if he did not go to life for them in the first instance, he himself lived the novels he had written.

Well had he himself said: "A literary man who is a man of action is a two-edged weapon; nor should it be forgotten that Julius Cæsar and Frederick the Great were both eminent literary characters, and yet were perhaps the two most distinguished men of action of ancient and modern times." Equally well could one conceive either of them fighting a battle to get matter for a book, or writing a book to make record of a battle.

Disraeli throughout his life constantly blended fiction with fact, and fact with fiction. If Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, the title Beaconsfield was taken in the early chapters of *Vivian Grey*; and Cyprus annexed and the Queen made Empress of India in the pages of *Tancred*. Well, in one respect, did Mr. Balfour say to a lady who longed to meet Dizzy that he was but "a brazen mask speaking his own novels."

*Time's Revenges*

To the Hon. Reginald Brett :

"I never trouble to be avenged. When a man injures me, I put his name on a slip of paper and lock it up in a drawer. It is marvellous how the men I have thus labelled have the knack of disappearing."

An anecdote for which I am indebted to the Poet Laureate makes a delightful sequel to this saying. It shows us the fairer side of the medal. Sir John Pope-Hennessy, in early youth, conceived a romantic admiration for Disraeli, and wrote to him a letter couched somewhat in the strain of that in which Maggie Tulliver told Sir Walter how clever she was and how unhappy. The Irish boy's letter to Disraeli ended, "*I love you.*" No answer came : Disraeli's rule of no reply was all but inexorable. Did he put the names, too, of these ardent acolytes away in that drawer, beside those of his detractors? Certain it is, that immediately Pope-Hennessy made his first adventurous attack on an Irish seat, and was rewarded by success, a messenger came down to his chambers in the Temple bearing a missive from Disraeli. It was a hasty summons to a Parliamentary dinner the next night, where all others around the board were senators of experience. The after career of "the Pope" as a Colonial Governor of Disraeli's making was full

of romantic incidents, hinting at universal rather than official sympathies, and a disposition to make war, not on native races, but on Downing Street.



*Alone in the Country*

"I find the greatest repose in solitude," he said at Hughenden, towards his life's close, to Janetta, Duchess of Rutland.

This became the abiding mood ; but it was not a solitude that is vacancy ; it was peopled ; it was the "never less alone than when alone" of Cardinal Newman's love. He enjoyed peace—with honour ; a repose that was not paralysis ; a resting on, rather than from, his labours ; books were always his friends, and they now became his company at dinner, with a pause for ten minutes' reading between each course. The mistress of Hughenden was no more, but memories of her were all about him ; and he could take in retrospect the pleasure she had once shared with him in his woods and fields ; in those beloved juniper bushes ; in the peacocks, not more proud of themselves than he was proud of them ; in the starlight, wherein he walked to the accompaniment of bats ; in the sunshine, which had been his very life in youth ; and in the round of seasons, rough and sweet, subtly charged for mourning man with ever new and uncovenanted compensations,



"I have scarcely exchanged a word with any one for three weeks ;<sup>1</sup> but the delight of living in the country in summer is ever new to me : I perpetually discover fresh charms."

This, too, was said to the same friend, doubly endeared to Lord Beaconsfield for her husband's sake and her own. She bore witness to the wide sympathy with which he looked out on the world, and the reward which nature gave to him, as to all townsmen who "go seek her, find her, and are friends again" : "He delighted in flowers, from the violet and primrose to the gardenia or the rare orchid. Beautiful faces, soft voices, children's ways, even if sometimes rather like what we hear of Puck, refreshed him." No understanding of Disraeli as looker-on or prime actor in life will be intelligent unless this appreciation of "Puckishness" be taken in count. The Duchess continues : "Lord Beaconsfield seemed to find pleasure in the commonest beauties—the luxuriance of the grass, even the apparent comfort of the cattle in the rich pastures. He spent much time in the open air. Like John Evelyn, he found constant interest in trees and the theoretical part of woodcraft."

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"It pains me to see it : take it away."

<sup>1</sup> Again, he wrote during his widowerhood to the Duchess from lonely Hughenden "I have not spoken to a human being for a fortnight."



*Photo by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford*

**LORD INACONSILLID**

From a photograph taken in the seventies

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The capacity for pleasure implies (alas, in what disproportion!) the capacity for pain. One day Lord Beaconsfield, walking in Hughenden Park with Janet, Duchess of Rutland, was accosted by a daft rustic, to whom he had gladly given the liberty of his demesne. "Lord Beaconsfield," his companion afterwards recorded, "spoke in a particularly kind manner and listened to his story. The poor old man rambled in his talk about a dead bird he had found and carried in his hand. Lord Beaconsfield, after looking at the bird, said: 'It pains me to see it: take it away.'"



### *The Beginning of the End*

"I must speak at once"

—the message he sent to Lord Granville across the floor of the House of Lords during an early stage of the debate on the Gladstone Government's abandonment of Candahar, March 5th, 1881.

At the fag-end of his life, you may say he was impatient for the first time. The "I can wait" of his early school-days, and the "they may wait" of his apprenticeship in the House of Commons, expressed the two-fold spirit in which, five years earlier, he had entered on his duties in the House of Lords.

"Your lordships will remember," said Lord Granville, after the passing away of Lord Beaconsfield, and in illustration of his powers of patience and self-control,

“how silent and reticent he was at first, until an unfounded accusation gave him an opportunity of making a speech, which at once established the hold on this House which he had so long maintained in another place.” But now was no time for delay, though it was still the time for self-repression. Lord Granville’s words reach home once more : “At ten o’clock on the second evening of the Afghan debate, Lord Beaconsfield sent me word that he must speak at once. I sent back a strong remonstrance. Two noble lords who formerly held office, and a third with remarkable power of speaking, wished to take part in the debate. Lord Beaconsfield, however, persisted, and, in following him, I complained to your lordships of what he had done. I thought at the time I was justified in that complaint ; but it is with regret that I have since learned that just before my remonstrance Lord Beaconsfield had swallowed one drug and inhaled another in quantities nicely calculated to free him from his suffering during the time required for his speech.”

The double Lord Beaconsfield indeed : the man of physical courage, whom pain could not quell ; the man of moral courage who, rather than parade, or even plead, his claim to a place on the political martyrology of England, preferred to be lectured, lamented over, and misunderstood,

*The Procession's Close*

The twelfth Duke of Somerset, in 1878, looking near half a century backward, said: "Many years ago, when Disraeli was dining with me, before he was in Parliament, we were talking of 'What was the most desirable life?' and he said he considered the most desirable life to be 'A continued grand procession from manhood to the tomb.'"

He had his desire.

It is interesting to recall Disraeli's own record of a dinner—perhaps the very occasion of this visionary pronouncement—with the Duke, then Lord St. Maur, so far back as the June of 1833 :

"I dined yesterday with the St. Maurs to meet Mrs. Sheridan" (the grandmother of Lady St. Maur). "An agreeable party; and Mrs. Blackwood and Brinsley. Lord St. Maur, great talent, which develops itself in a domestic circle, though otherwise shy-mannered."

It was this shyness which never deserted him, together with an unerring reticence and a dignified restraint stoics might envy, that gained for him the sobriquet of "the proud Duke of Somerset."



*A Counsel of Perfection*

To his best friend, as a last direction before his death :

"Never defend me,"

*The Last Illness*

"I have no strength left—let us return."

To Lord Barrington the words were spoken by Lord Beaconsfield in the east-windy March of 1881, during a walk in the neighbourhood of Curzon Street—the last before the Minister took to bed. Five weeks later, the attack of bronchitis, an expression of gout, and attended by spasmodic asthma, closed his life. Lord Rowton having accompanied his sister, who was seriously ill, to the South of France, Lord Barrington was in charge of the Chief. More than once during their walks together the Minister exhibited evident signs of exhaustion, such as these quoted words express. Once, indeed, he had to support himself by holding on to the iron railings of a house he was passing; and but for the assistance of Lord Barrington's arm would have been unable to get home. Having taken to his bed, he was never able to leave it, except in moments when the muscular debility which commonly overcame him seemed to lift, and to leave him in possession of a delusive energy of body matching that energy of will which even yet no bodily lassitude could quench.

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"But how is it to be arranged with Kidd?"

The question was put by Lord Beaconsfield when, in the early stages of his fatal illness, he was urged

by Sir Philip Rose to call in Quain.<sup>1</sup> Sir Philip was not the Minister's lawyer only; he was also his friend; he had been on the point of starting for Pau when, hearing the grave news from Curzon Street, he hastened thither. Sir Philip, knowing that Dr. Kidd, a homœopath, was in attendance, was urgent that his own doctor, who had attended him with success in an illness partially like the Minister's, should be summoned. Instantly the stricken man thought, not of the advantage to himself, but of possible uncomfortable complications for his first adviser of long and kind standing. The diplomacy demanded by the situation was rendered the more delicate by the notorious unwillingness of allopaths to meet the dispensers of a differing system. Now, however, time pressed; a life, precious to the nation—the nation had not known how precious until now—was at stake; and the Sovereign herself, whose wish was still a command to her Favourite Minister, urged the instant calling in of additional advice. So Dr. Quain came; and, a little later, he brought Dr. Bruce, a young specialist from the Brompton Hospital. While these three physicians, and especially two of them, continued through nights and days to fight death inch by inch, Lord Beaconsfield cross-questioned

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Richard Quain. He was born at Mallow in 1816, and died at the age of eighty-two, leaving no heir to the baronetcy conferred on him seven years earlier in recognition of his services to members of the Royal Family.



them, speaking of his case as if it were that of a stranger ; an onlooker was he to the end.

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"I will not go down to posterity as one who used bad grammar."

To Lord Barrington the words were addressed by Lord Beaconsfield during his last illness, after he had corrected with pains a proof of the speech delivered a fortnight earlier in the House of Lords. The proof went back to the editor with this note :

"19, CURZON STREET, W.

"Lord Barrington presents his compliments to the editor of *Hansard's Debates* and returns the proof sheet of Lord Beaconsfield's speech on the address of condolence to the Queen,<sup>1</sup> corrected by his own hand this day.

"*March 31st, 1881.*"

Among the "Letters" printed elsewhere will be found one addressed to Mr. Hansard by Disraeli twenty years earlier, showing the almost excited care with which he entered on the third and last stage of a speech, so that the careful preparation and delivery of it should be followed by an equally careful report. As for the grammar, the allusion embodies what perhaps may be called Disraeli's one large illusion. Alas ! Disraeli's books, as now printed, do send him down

<sup>1</sup> On the assassination of the Tsar of Russia,

to posterity—a long one may it be!—a user of bad grammar. He was, in some familiar faults, even as a Gibbon gone mad.

It may be said, indeed, that Disraeli did very literally write the Queen's English, and not only in the Queen's speeches. Neither Queen Victoria nor her Minister was able to realise the superfluity of the "and" before a relative which is not a reiterated one. "We are in the midst of a ministerial crisis *and* which I am afraid will be followed by others," wrote Queen Victoria. And Disraeli: "His presence was a relief to an anxious family *and* who were beginning to get alarmed." Again: "He had become possessed of a vast principality *and* which was not an hour's drive from Whitechapel." Nor was this grammar. These sentences, taken at random from *Endymion*, may perhaps suggest yet another addition to the many ridiculous explanations of the bond of sympathy between her Majesty and Lord Beaconsfield. It may be traced to a superfluous conjunction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "And which," in this jumbled sense, is rampant in *Lothair*. "The last saloon led into a room of smaller dimensions opening on the garden, *and which* Lothair thought," etc. "Lothair . . . had the gratification, for the first time, of seeing his own service of gold plate laid out in completeness, *and which* had been for some time exhibited." "On the lawn was a tent of many colours, designed by himself, *and which* might have suited some splendid field of chivalry." "'I know no higher sentiment,' said Theodora, in a low voice, *and yet which* sounded like the breathing of some divine shrine." "A procession of almost unequal (*sic*) splendour and sanctity, *and which* was to parade the whole church." "In the next room, not less spacious, *but which*

On being told that Lord Rowton was speeding from Algiers, and would be with him on a certain day :

"Oh no," Lord Beaconsfield said, "he cannot

had a more inhabited look." These instances, picked almost at random, consort with shuffling, down-at-heel sentences such as these : "'All I can do is,' said his Eminence, when his visitor was ushered out, and shrugging his shoulders," etc. Neither his Eminence nor the visitor shrugged grammatically, but we are to suppose that the shoulders were his Eminence's. Furthermore, Lothair "felt how inferior was this existence to *that of* a life in a truly religious family." The divine Theodora, too, gives a twist to her utterances. "'You have not suffered, I hope?' said Lothair. 'Very little, *and* through your kindness,'" is the reply, which says, but does not mean, that the lady had suffered through the kindness of her adorer. "Instead of being a parasite," our author says in another place, "everybody flattered him," which is not at all what he meant to say. "As she spoke she moved, and, without formally inviting him, he found himself walking by her side," is another jumble of verbs and pronouns. "Although never authoritative . . . Lothair could not but feel that during the happy period he had passed in her society not only his taste had refined," etc. It is not Lothair, however, but the lady who was "not authoritative." "Neither Monsignor Capel nor Father Coleman were present," contains an error besides that famous one of the real Capel for the fictitious Catesby. The sporting grammarian may make a record bag of similar and fifty other species of errors on the spacious hunting-grounds of these last couple of romances, which, if not better, are not worse than their predecessors—all, by literary ill-luck, written at top speed and too hastily revised. The friend—every author possesses such a one friend, and nearly every other author used him—to whom these pages might have passed for revision while the novelist lived might surely, one thinks, render that humble pedagogic service even now, and so fulfil in spirit the only prediction of Disraeli's about himself that time has been able to falsify : "I will not go down to posterity as one who used bad grammar." Meanwhile a certain derogation—the word is not too strong—attaches to what is illogical or slipshod in language; even while readers rejoice that, just as good grammar does not redeem a bad book, bad grammar cannot destroy a good one.

be here so soon. Nobody comes straight from Algiers. He must stop three days on the journey to acclimatise."

This he said of the man who had been more to him than a brother; and the saying is the measure of his final patience, the ruling habit strong in death. Yet by the time Lord Rowton did in all haste arrive, the sufferer had begun to dread the excitement of an interview so long postponed, and now so charged with emotion. Not until the fourth day after his return, therefore, did it take place.

"Let him come to me gradually," the dying Chief said to Lord Barrington, when made aware that Lord Rowton was in waiting. With the failure of his nerve power—the nerve power which had so long borne the strain, and which was always superior to his mere muscular strength—any effort, mental or physical, became a terrible fatigue—even the effort of seeing his friends. Lord Barrington, therefore, rarely went to him where he lay, or sat half-recumbent, on an invalid lounge in one of the rooms which, being *en suite*, permitted him change of air when he was wheeled from one to another; and it was his servant, Baum, whom, on April 11th, he requested to read the report of the Parliamentary debate of the day before. Baum excused himself, and suggested that Lord Rowton should undertake the task, a proposal which the Chief instantly accepted, and

which, in the carrying out of it, made more possible that saddest of reunions that proclaims the imminence of final farewell. What loss had been inflicted by the Secretary's absence at the outset can never be said ; but the deprivation, from the doctors' standpoint, was hinted at in an article published in the *Lancet* when all was over.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Beaconsfield, for his health's sake, according to this writer, should have gone to the House of Lords earlier or not at all. "Speaking now freely, we believe the deceased statesman would have lived longer if he had *not* thus late retired to a scene of comparative quiet, upon which he ought, in the interests of his health, to have entered when the Queen urged him to do so some years before. As it was, Lord Beaconsfield was deprived of his accustomed mental stimulus at the precise moment when he most needed it ; and although his immediate personal feelings were those of relief, the physical ease was purchased at too great a price. From the outset of the last illness the case was, in our judgment, hopeless, unless the higher cerebral centres of the nervous system came to the relief of the lower. The bronchitis was not a 'complication,' but an integral part of the gouty affection. It was, in the history of the noble lord's life, one of the earliest indications of the gouty diathesis, the next in order of time being slight gastric and intestinal irritation. It must ever be a source of regret that Lord Rowton, who alone had stood in close personal relations with the deceased gentleman during many recent and trying years of his life, was unavoidably absent during the first and only hopeful stage of his illness. It is also, we think, unfortunate that Lord Rowton did not see the noble lord until four days after his return, whatever may have been the fact as to Lord Beaconsfield's own wishes in the matter. It is again, we think, to be regretted that her Majesty's graciously expressed desire to visit the noble lord was not carried into effect. We must be excused for giving expression to these regrets—they are essential to the professional view we take of the illness. In the end death occurred, as it must have been expected to occur, after a temporary revival of the falling powers of vitality such as is usually manifested in cases of the class, in the closing days of a life lived, mainly, by mental energy or mind-force." Lord Beaconsfield

Lord Beaconsfield : "What is the day of the month?"

Lord Barrington : "April 7th."

Lord Beaconsfield : "I think it is time you should write to the young Duke of Portland and tell him I cannot come to him for Easter week."

That was the last private business he transacted ; and it serves to show that, until twelve days before his death, he had not despaired of an early recovery. It was as he would have wished it to be : Welbeck, with all its associations of Lord George Bentinck in life and death, received his last social message. Moreover, that failure to fulfil the Welbeck engagement ended his record with the dinner-party at which he had been the guest of the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House on Saturday, March 19th. He was very unwell that night when he came home ; and, next day, he began that last confinement to his room which, a week later, was diversified by a meeting of some of his political colleagues to discuss the speech to be delivered by Lord Cairns in the House of Lords condemning the Transvaal policy of the Liberal Government.

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"I like you to remain with me," Lord Beaconsfield

was to die on the first anniversary of the day on which he left Windsor Castle after tendering to Queen Victoria his resignation as her Prime Minister.

said to one of his physicians who was about to depart, but made haste to stay.

"No, no," the patient added after a few minutes of self-reproach, "I must not be selfish. Others need you—go!"

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"Baum, you will be a happy man: you will remember with pleasure how much you have done for me."

This Lord Beaconsfield said to his confidential attendant, who had formerly served Lady Beaconsfield, and who during five weeks of the fatal illness scarce left the bedside of his master. The care his servants took of him became almost a care of Lord Beaconsfield's own at the last. "The servants ought to be rewarded," he said to Lord Rowton; "and Baum ought to be rewarded; I must leave it to you and Rose to arrange."

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"Take away that emblem of mortality," Lord Beaconsfield said, when a circular air-cushion was offered to him by the physicians. The allusion to the symbolic bladder from which, at Death's dart, the breath passes, indicated, even under effort, some of the old habit of hyperbolic expression. To the politics of the day he made epigrammatic allusions, and the daily bulletins published in the papers, before all hope was

abandoned, had his onlooking criticism. One day when the report ran, "Lord Beaconsfield's strength is maintained," "I presume," he said, "the physicians are conscious of that. It is more than I am."

Again, when the slip of paper testifying that he "had taken nourishment well" was shown him, he demurred about the "well." In the same spirit, after listening to the fair words of one of the physicians, whom he narrowly watched, he said: "His words are hopeful, but his countenance is that of a disappointed man."

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"I have suffered much. Had I been a Nihilist, I should have confessed all."

What exactly was the trend of thought underlying this almost last of Lord Beaconsfield's sayings has been sometimes in dispute. Various versions of the saying went abroad; and various interpretations, born of personal wishes and sympathies, were hazarded. That he desired to confess, even as Rossetti did when he came to die—a kind of spiritual trace of Italian sojournings of the old Disraelis under the shadow of Venetian domes dominating to the third generation—and that he led the way thus, inviting a response that was never made by the shy or the inept about him: this is one ingenious theory, to which was doubtless due the further rumour that a Jesuit confessor,



close at hand in Farm Street (Father Clare was named), had been summoned to his side. Others, not less of fanatics, but less of friends, read into the words, or into vague versions of them, the vacuous longing of a man who had posed all his life to pose also in death ; to do, not the natural thing, but the dramatic ; to gratify a scenic passion and to pass away with a last appeal, not to God, but to the gods. They found him regretting that, not being a Nihilist, he would lack the luxury of a last confession.

A quieter translation of the speech that came from that sensitive brain in the last stages of disarray, ran rather thus : " Deathbed avowals and moralisings are a legacy counted upon by the English public ; and from me a section of that public expects the lip-service profession of faith I have shrunk from making in life, and cannot now bring myself to frame. As Lacordaire said he died ' an impenitent Liberal,' so I too die an impenitent. I have nothing to retract, but if I had been a Nihilist, I should have confessed all."

A more natural rendering remains ; it is also, alas ! a more painful one. We would evade it with others, if we might. Yet the friend to whom the words were addressed faced it then and afterwards. There had lately been much talk in the air of Nihilists—Lord Beaconsfield's last speech was on the Tsar's assassination—and tales were told of the torture inflicted on them by the Russian Government to force them to

confess. The agony he himself endured was such, he meant to say, as must have secured from him, had he been a Nihilist, an acknowledgment of guilt.

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"Death must be faced boldly."

All his life he had, in one mood and another, thought and written of death.

"When we are young we think not only ourselves, but all about us, are immortal. Until the arrow has struck a victim on our own hearth, death is merely an unmeaning word. There are few, even among those least susceptible of thought and emotion, in whose hearts and minds the first death in the family does not act as a powerful revelation of the mysteries of life and of their own being; and youth, gay and light-hearted youth, is taught for the first time to regret and to fear."

But regrets and fears may fret and hamper a spirit that needs the spur to present duty; and, at that pass, he declares:

"One should never think of death, one should think of life—that is the real piety."

Not that the greatest activity will always be an anodyne for the heart's outreaching. So it happens that, in *Lothair*, Disraeli put into the mouths of the mature man and the neophyte alike the language of the seeker.

"I was a Parliamentary Christian," says the Cardinal, "till despondency and study, and censeless thought and prayer, and the divine will, brought me to light and rest."

And young Lothair :

"Life would be perfect if it would only last. But it will not last ; and what then ? He could not reconcile interest in this life with the conviction of another and an eternal one. It seemed to him that men could have only one thought and one occupation—the future, and preparation for it. What they called reality appeared to him more vain and nebulous than the scenes and sights of sleep. And he had had that conviction. Had he it now ? Yes, he had it now, but modified, perhaps. He was not so confident as he was a few months ago that he could be ushered by a Jesuit from his deathbed to the society of St. Michael and all angels. There might be long processes of initiation, intermediate states of higher probation and refinement. . . . When millions of years appeared to be necessary to mature the crust of a rather insignificant planet, it might be presumption in man to assume that his soul, though immortal, was to reach its final destination regardless of all the influence of time and space."

Purgatorial, truly, are the fires by which man's faith and patience are tried all his life through. And

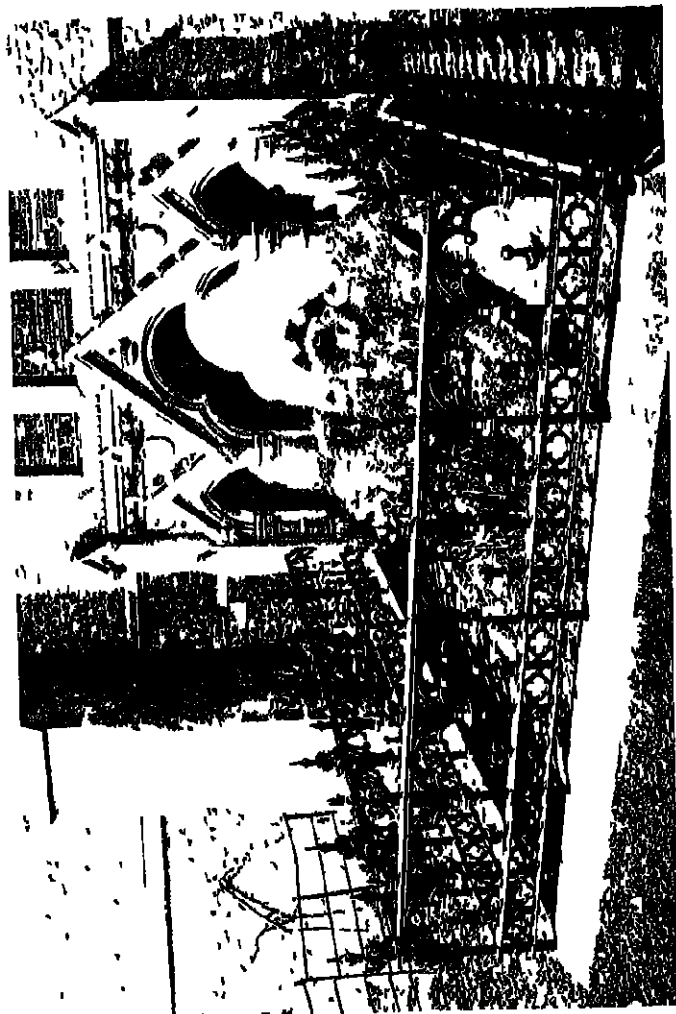
at the end of all searchings, it is—faith and patience still. So he, too, said: "The great secret—we cannot penetrate that with all our philosophy. Truth is veiled; but, like the Shekinah over the tabernacle, the veil is of dazzling light."

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"I had rather live, but I am not afraid to die."

This was the only profession of faith uttered by the dying statesman—a Parliamentary leader in the last act of death. The drowsiness of the last hours gradually became a stupor; and at about two o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, April 19th, Lord Rowton, Lord Barrington, the three physicians, the nurses and body-servants were gathered round the great gladiator of so many a mortal combat. Lord Rowton and Lord Barrington clasped the right hand, while Dr. Kidd held the left, noting, by the action of the pulse, the reluctant ebb of life. Then, a quarter of an hour before his heart ceased to beat, a strangely affecting movement of the dying man was observed by those two devoted political friends—the most devoted man ever had. The Minister, his ministering over, half raised himself from his recumbent posture, and stretched himself out, as his wont was when rising to reply in debate. Then his lips moved; but no words came to the acutely listening ears about him. Only Death heard; that adversary the first he had ever failed to defeat. Now at last even he

must pay forfeit for Adam's fault. He heard perhaps the division bell as he sank back supine : and knew it for a knell. " O eloquent, just, and mighty Death," the words of Walter Raleigh surge back to mind, "whom none could advise thou hast persuaded."



*Photo by H W Tansil & Co., Oxford*

THE DISRALL VULF AT HUGHENDE  
Showing the wreaths deposited there after the funeral of Lord Beconsfield



## II

### LETTERS

#### *Early Travels*

"I think the situation will suit."

So wrote Disraeli to Mrs. Austen in the July of 1826, in acceptance of her invitation to him to be her and her husband's companion in a tour in Switzerland and Italy.

His first foreign travel had been in Germany, where he made a short stay in the companionship—renewed in later and longer travels—of Mr. William Meredith. This second change was necessitated by the nervous break-down that followed the production of the first three volumes of *Vivian Grey* and his abortive connexion with the *Star Chamber*. His first sight of the South must have been further enlivened and endeared to him by the presence of these two particularly kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Austen, who were neighbours of the Disraelis in Bloomsbury and the most serviceable observers of Benjamin's early years. The travellers left England on August 4th, 1826. A most interesting article went to the



*Quarterly Review* sixty-one years later from a writer who had before him the diary kept by Mrs. Austen on the journey. This lady, the daughter of a gentleman named Rickett, residing at Oundle, in Northamptonshire, became, in her youth and remarkable beauty, the wife of Benjamin Austen, a London solicitor in large practice. She was a woman of many accomplishments, and of a few more years than his own; and Disraeli, who loved youth in men but was greatly drawn to maturity in women, at once formed with her a friendship which conferred on him instant favours—this journey to Italy, for example—and upon her a lasting commemoration. Perhaps he counted upon his future to make the recompense that he then had no means to make, and that it has made abundantly. We seem to have a hint of the kind in a light word of advice to her to keep his letters; which would be of value yet, he explained, if he became as famous as he intended. Five days were passed in Paris and, after posting through France, the party arrived at Geneva, Disraeli keenly alert to all things, including French cookery and the Burgundy in which he took as much delight as a hero of George Meredith's might, attributing to it the inspirations of generous talk. Byron's boatman was a feature of Geneva, and Disraeli lay back in a boat on the Lake taking in impressions, afterwards reproduced in *Venetia*, of storm-clouds—among men and

in the heavens. From that very boat had Byron himself witnessed the thunder and lightning ; they seemed to Disraeli to be seeing it together ; and that was a link which must last in his case, he having a most faithful nature. Probably he never became aware of the verse that Aubrey de Vere, then in an Irish nursery, wrote amid the same scenes years later, but it must have come very near to expressing his own mood :

For we the mighty mountain-tops have trod  
Both in the glow of sunset and sunrise,  
And lightened by the moon of southern skies.  
The snow-white torrent of the thundering flood  
We two have watched together. In the wood  
We two have felt the warm tears dim our eyes  
While zephyrs softer than an infant's sighs  
Ruffled the light air of our solitude.

O Earth, maternal Earth, and thou, O Heaven,  
And Night, first-born, who now, even now, dost waken  
The host of stars, thy constellated train !  
Tell me if those can ever be forgiven,  
Those abject, who together have partaken  
These Sacraments of Nature and in vain !

Disraeli's commune with Byron, later to take literary form, had its instant effect on his habits, even upon his costume. He ordered Eastern dress, and he sighed for Eastern travel. It was to come in due course. For the present, however, he must be content to

cross the Simplon into Italy. The party paused at Milan, still fragrant with memories of its great Archbishop, St. Charles Borromeo, whose name and fame were to be made familiar in England by Disraeli's future friend, and the prototype of two of his "characters"—Cardinal Manning. Picture galleries were seen with a rather conventional eye, and then Venice was entered. All these cities seem to have especial relation to Disraeli the cosmopolitan. They had harboured Disraelis in the past, or they were to become the scenes of episodes in his own life or in his novels, or they were to be affected by his statesmancraft. Some one of the many men who composed that one man, citizen of the world as he was, had a destined home in each place that was visited. The Past, the Present, or the Future, called to him from the very stones, and in Venice most of all. There had his race found a home, in that republic of liberty, where Catholic zealots practised charity to those who were not of their number—"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." He went into the ghetto, where his fathers had foregathered, wearing on their gaberdines the yellow O—of which he was incongruously reminded in later years by the bookplate of Lord Ormonde, with its capital letter printed in orange—and there he still found children of his race, with whom he talked—daughters of Israel to whom he brought morning offerings of fruit and flowers.

The quays of Venice, the most cosmopolitan in the world in their traditions, signalled to him.

All her waters quiver  
With his fair image facing him for ever.

Like his own—very much his own—Contarini Fleming, he saw his Southern face constantly repeated in the faces about him. "My Venetian countenance," says Contarini Fleming of his own, contrasting it with the Northern visages of his two brothers. He meets a procession from St. Mark's; they come swinging their censers and singing; and "You have been long expected" is the burden of their song. Of the resemblance between Disraeli and many a Venetian there could be no doubt; his dress itself, even in the later days, had no English look about it; and flitting visitors to Brighton, fancying a facial resemblance, gave the name of Disraeli to the North Italian seller of brandy-snaps upon the Brighton beach in the early 'seventies. In 1900, after Disraeli had gone to his fathers, and when a new generation faced a new century, I found myself confronted in St. Mark's with Disraeli's double—in face, in figure, I imagined in temperament. He was a canon of St. Mark's, and, in his stall, even while the Mass proceeded, he appeared to be an onlooker. In the Piazza at night he passed through the gaily decorous throng unseeing: neither the world nor the Church gave

its stamp to a countenance which yet, like Disraeli's own, seemed made for mobility.

Disraeli's own first impressions of St. Mark's, its Square, and "the tall campanile red in the sun," now seen no more, the flagstaffs and the populace, are preserved for us in *Contarini Fleming*. "I hastened," Contarini records, "to the Place of St. Mark. It was crowded and illuminated. Three gorgeous flags waved on the mighty staffs, which once bore the standards of Candia and Cyprus and the Morea. The coffee-houses were full, and gay parties, seated on chairs in the open air, listened to the music of military bands, while they refreshed themselves with confectionery so rich and fanciful that it excites the admiration of all travellers"—confectionery which Disraeli and Contarini Fleming in common afterwards discovered in Turkey to be Oriental: confectionery, alas! long since ousted from beneath those otherwise still happy colonnades. "The variety of costumes," continues this double narrative, written in days when costume was still worn by the lower and some of the middle classes in Venice, "was also great. . . . A few days before my arrival, the Austrian squadron had carried into Venice a Turkish ship and two Greek vessels which had violated the neutrality. Their crews now mingled with the crowd. I beheld for the first time the haughty and turbaned Ottoman, sitting cross-legged on a carpet under a colonnade, sipping his coffee,

and smoking a long chibouque, and the Greeks with their small red caps, their high foreheads and arched eyebrows." The day happened to be a festival of the Church : hence the especial gaiety of the scene—a scene " pervaded with an air of romance and refinement compared with which the glittering dissipation of Paris, even in its liveliest and most graceful hours, assumes a character alike coarse and commonplace."

From Venice, Disraeli proceeded to Florence in the travelling-carriage of the Austens, making, by the way, in true Byronian discipleship, a pilgrimage to the tomb of Petrarch at Arquà and to the prison of Tasso at Ferrara. In Florence itself, Contarini Fleming, we may remember, formed the opinion that he scarcely knew another place " he would prefer as a residence." (This, long before the days of Landor and the Brownings.) " The character of Art, both from ancient associations and its present possessions, is forcibly impressed upon this city. It is full of invention. You cannot stroll fifty yards, you cannot enter a church or palace, without being favourably reminded of the power of human thought. It is a famous memorial of the genius of the Italian middle ages, when the mind of man was in one of its spring-tides, and when we mark so frequently what at the present day we too much underrate, the influence of individual character. In Florence the monuments are not only of great men, but of the greatest. You do

not gaze upon the tomb of an author who is merely a great master of composition, but of one who formed the language. The illustrious astronomer is not the discoverer of a planet, but the revealer of the whole celestial machinery."

The return journey was made by Genoa, Turin, the Mont Cenis, and Paris again, London being reached at the end of October. Those three months of the year 1826 were ever memorable to Disraeli, who could not rest until he was again *en voyage* in 1830—this time on that journey to Spain, Greece, and the East of which his "Home Letters" tell the stirring tale. The Alhambra might put into the background of his memory the Ducal Palace as "a barbarous though picturesque building"; and the paintings of Murillo—grandiose yet also peasant-loving like himself—might all but banish the memory of the Fra Bartolommeos he had particularly admired in Florence. Nothing in his first journey was so adventurous as the visit he paid, during his second, to Corfu, in order to volunteer into the Turkish army under the Grand Vizier, Reschid Pasha, then suppressing an insurrection of the Albanians—Disraeli himself, by the way, wore an Albanian costume on the *Susan*, his friend Clay's yacht. Nothing that he had before experienced was quite so weird as his visit to Kalio Bey at Arta, the only occasion (and we have his own frank record of it) of his becoming drunk with wine; nothing so

dazzlingly ambitious as that dream at Athens which took shape in a letter to Mrs. Austen : "Had I £25,000 to throw away, I might, I really believe, increase my headaches by wearing a crown." But impressions of first travel, like impressions of first love, are ineffaceable. Greater wonders may be in store ; but they are subservient in a measure to the magic of the earlier experience. What Disraeli owed to this dear friend, Mrs. Austen, he never ceased to remember ; and long afterwards he praised the Fates that allowed him to confer on his old friend's nephew, Sir Austen Layard—though Layard was no formal follower of his in politics—the honours and riches of high ambassadorial rank.



### III Health

*To Mrs. Benjamin Austen.*

"BRADENHAM,

" March 7th, 1830.

"I am desirous of quitting England that I may lead even a more recluse life than I do at present, and release myself from perpetual commiseration. When I was in town last I consulted many eminent men. I received from them no consolation. I grieve to say my hair grows very badly ; and, I think, more grey, which, I can unfeignedly declare, occasions me more anguish than even the prospect of death."

A stay at Lyme Regis in the November of 1829



had left Disraeli still "desperately ill"; and the life to which, one supposes from the concluding passage of this letter to Mrs. Austen, he was but lightly attached was even given up for lost. He complained of a "stupor" which made literary composition impossible; it did more at times; for he speaks of sleeping sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, and of passing "a week nearly in a trance from digitalis;" he had giddiness in the head and palpitation of the heart—a formula from which we may gather that he suffered extreme feebleness and inertia from digitalis poisoning—though digitalis, as we now know, strengthens, not weakens, the heart. "Your deceased though sincere friend," was the signature to this letter.



*A Friend in Need*

*To Benjamin Austen.*

"Let me express my grateful sense of your unparalleled kindness, and pardon me if I add that I think better of myself for having excited so warm a friendship in the heart of an honourable and excellent man."

That was Disraeli's thanksgiving to the husband of Mrs. Austen for the gift, coming through his hand, which enabled Disraeli to start on his Eastern tour in the June of 1830. This lady outlived her younger friend, dying in 1887 at the age of ninety-two.

**Sarah Disraeli**

"My letters are shorter than Napoleon's, but I love you better than he did Josephine."—*Disraeli to his sister, August 4th, 1833.*

I have heard it alleged against Disraeli, as his one marked deficiency, that he did not love women. Certainly he did not love them promiscuously; and "love," in inverted commas, the fancy of passion that passes with passion, he distrusted utterly. Hence we have him as very much of an onlooker even among women. Love of sister was the serenely ruling feeling of his early life; love of wife of his later; and if there are few series of letters so wittily informative of current events in the London of the 'thirties as those which Disraeli devotedly sent to his sister, "Dearest Sa," so also nothing is much more touching than his recurrence in the last script of his old age to the scenes and incidents of his and her childhood at Bradenham. "A thousand loves" he sends to her in youth; and, half a century later, in Myra Ferrars she blooms again. If women do not see how interesting he made them in his books—what allies as well as what lovers; if they do not imagine themselves represented in the person of his wife and sister, who stood to him for the sex; if they do not enjoy and share those honours and accept the constancy of a supreme man to one woman as the best homage he

can render to all Womanhood ;—they must be held most justly, even when most profusely, reproached for the insensibility of their sex, in Elizabethan love-songs. That Disraeli knew love as a consuming passion, can any one who has read *Henrietta Temple*, or read men, doubt? That the man of affairs in him—of affairs in the large, not the light sense—fought against love as a mere passion for himself is his own avowal. He kept his wings unsinged ; and there is not a breath against him as a light-lover. His sonnet to Lady Mahon, though her husband did not welcome it, would not now be held to be even an indiscretion ; and any allusions we have of his to the charms of ladies he met upon his travels—Mrs. Considine and the Misses Brackenbury—are enough to show him impressionable but also self-repressing. Once he speaks to his sister of a woman who has, alas ! the power to make him melancholy ; and once again, in tender days, he asks her how she would like as a sister-in-law Lady —, with a well-filled purse. It was a hint of proud possibilities : no more. His intimates say that he never had a refusal ; and under cover of that statement may be forgotten the gossip in the years of his widowerhood which thus associated his name with that of the widowed Lady Chesterfield.

Sarah Disraeli was born in the Adelphi in 1802, the eldest child of her parents. A charming girl, all records of her pronounce her to be ; and early in

her girlhood she began that unselfish adoration of her brother, two years her junior, which suffered no abatement in its fervour all the days of her life. A devoted daughter, she leaves the impression that even her father was dearer to her because he was the father also of Ben. Familiar is the story of her service to that father when, in 1840, his sight seriously failed him. "Amid this partial darkness, I am not left without a distant hope and a present consolation; and to HER who has so often lent me the light of her eyes, the intelligence of her voice, and the careful work of her hand, the author must ever owe the 'debt immense' of paternal gratitude." A year later he said of his *Amenities of Literature*: "The author is denied the satisfaction of reading a single line of it. It has been confided to ONE whose eyes unceasingly peruse the volume for him who can never read, and whose eager hand traces the thought ere it vanish in the thinking." One imagines the reluctance of the modest amanuensis at this, almost her rebellion. One feels the emotion of both father and daughter when such passages were dictated, and the glorified type of the HER and the ONE was insisted upon. Even-handed are the Fates; and Milton, whose genius Isaac Disraeli envied, might have envied Isaac Disraeli his daughter.

In her earlier twenties, Miss Sarah Disraeli became affianced to Mr. William Meredith, a young man of

good parts and of great expectations. Her father and brother first met him at rather famous dinners given in London by his uncle. This was Mr. William Meredith, senior, a retired contractor of large fortune, a bachelor, who spent thousands of pounds upon the endowment of Mr. Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, and his translation of Aristotle. The elder Meredith died in 1831, bequeathing his substance to his nephew, who, as chance had it, was at that very moment dying of fever while absent with Benjamin Disraeli in the East. A note supplied to the *Home Letters* by Mr. Ralph Disraeli says :

“The untimely death of his friend Meredith, bringing bitter grief to others than the travellers, occurred at Cairo. This sad event delayed my brother's departure for England.”

The Disraelis did not parade their griefs in public, or it might have been added that Benjamin Disraeli for years went unreconciled to that loss ; and that it affected his spirit till the end of his days. That sister, who thenceforth went widowed to the end of her earthly days, died in December, 1859, at the age of fifty-seven, in one of the Ailsa Park Villas at Twickenham, where, tending the flowers of her small garden, and devoting her spare means to the service of the poor, she lived a nun-like life, enlivened by the visits of her brother. Him she lived to see the Leader of the House of Commons, the debater

who did indeed "floor them all." She lies in the cemetery at Willesden, and over her ashes stands a Maltese cross, which bears the letters "I.H.S.," and the words "Thy will be done." Another and a later inscription is hers; that, oftener seen, which fitly occupies the dedication page of the *Home Letters*: "To the memory of the Dear Sister to whom so many of these letters were addressed."



*Bulwer-Lytton as Best Friend*

"Your father's conversation always conveyed to me new and productive ideas, and I reckon him among the two or three persons whose minds influenced the development of my own."—*Extract from a letter of Disraeli's to Robert, Earl of Lytton.*

A grain of salt must commonly be swallowed with what is said about sons to fathers, and particularly about fathers to sons. All the same, this friendship with Bulwer was one of Disraeli's early bits of good luck. He owed its beginning to his father; and it was perhaps partly in his mind when he spoke somewhere of the advantages it is to a man to have a distinguished father. Perhaps also, when he wrote a much misquoted passage about the doom of friends who married for "love"—love in quotation marks—he had an eye on Bulwer, whose marriage with Miss Rosina Wheeler realised Bulwer's mother's fearful

incredulity as to the possibility of a perennial infatuation. Invitations from the newly married pair at 36, Hertford Street, came to Disraeli on his first setting up as a man about town in 1832. In February, that year, as something of a *débutant*, he described "a very brilliant *réunion*," at which he talked to Lord Mulgrave, saw Lord Strangford, the father of his future friend, George Smythe ; admired Count D'Orsay, whom he had then to label for Bradenham "the famous Parisian dandy," but whom he was soon to share with Lady Blessington and others as "our dearest." Albany Fonblanque, Charles Villiers, Mrs. Gore, and L. E. L. were also there. A little later, at a dinner, he found Bulwer "more sumptuous and fantastic than ever" ; and we hear more of the hostess : "Mrs. B. was a blaze of jewels and looked like Juno ; only, instead of a peacock, she had a dog in her lap, called Fairy, and not bigger than a bird-of-paradise, and quite as brilliant." That was Disraeli's first time of kissing, too, with the open-brimmed champagne-glass : a saucer mounted on a pedestal, he says of it. At another "really brilliant *soirée*" there, that same season, he was introduced to his future fate, Mrs. Wyndham Lewis ; and there Lady Stepney paid him "ludicrous compliments" and asked him what he thought of Leonardo da Vinci—ludicrous again. Moore, too, was there ; and Lord Mulgrave once more. The season over, Bulwer went down to Bradenham with Disraeli,

and he too said "there was no place like it," with many other gratifying things, pleasing son and father alike by saying to the son : "I tell you where your father beats us all—in style." The young men are next heard of together in Bath—lions, of course. Invitations fluttered in ; they "preferred the relaxation of their own society." When they went to one public ball they were "quite mobbed" : Disraeli knew the sensation very well later in London drawing-rooms ; but he had his first and still sweet experience in England's, not London's, West. "I like Bath very much," he candidly said.

Back in London, he dines with Bulwer "to meet some truffles"—very agreeable company." Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Bulwer's mother, was there, "something between Jeremy Bentham and Meg Merrilies—very clever, but awfully revolutionary. She poured forth all her Systems"—and Sir Austin Feverel not at hand. If Robert, the future Viceroy, was brought up on them, they did not tend disastrously ; but while the lady "advocated the rights of woman, Bulwer abused system-mongers and the sex," while Rosina did decidedly the politic—usually different from the political—thing : "played with her dog." In 1838 he stayed with Bulwer at the Priory, Acton ; and in the autumn of 1850, when Bulwer had become Lytton, and Knebworth had been entered upon, he went down to the author of *The Last of the Barons* there.



"He is a real Baron," Disraeli then wrote, "though he will, I think, be the first, not the last of his race."

In the sense in which the lesser is merged in the larger, he was the last of the Barons too ; for Disraeli, continuing the friendship of one generation to another, gave the son—his father's son—the Viceroyalty that earned an earldom.

Bulwer's influence never made a spiritualist of Disraeli. Pressed by his friend to go to see some manifestations of animal magnetism, Disraeli conceded :

"Decidedly I will come, if you are serious in saying that a man walks on the ceiling."

When Disraeli had stood three or four years earlier for Marylebone, some one was supposed to ask him "on what, in offering himself, he intended to stand," and he was reported to reply: "On my head." He liked the invention well enough ; and, had the pencil of caricaturist been busied about him then, we can imagine the sort of topsy-turvy figures to be added to the gallery that belongs throughout rather to ribaldry than to humour. Bulwer did not give the guarantee ; and Disraeli therefore, never went—where Stanhope, Strangford, Maidstone, and others of their friends flocked—to M. de Dupotet's in Orchard Street.

"All London is mad with animal magnetism,"

Dizzy (keeping his head) wrote in the first year of the Victorian era—a madness which, under changing ways and means—especially means—of evoking it, endures into the Edwardian. Bulwer's recurrence to Rosicrucian mysteries is indicated in his *Zanoni*; and the following reading of Disraeli, arrived at by a process of divination known as geomancy, was found among his father's papers by Robert Lytton—happy alike in its reading of character and its forecast of events. The signature E. L. B. seems at first glance to indicate that it was cast before Bulwer changed his name to Lytton in the late 'thirties, and therefore, as is also internally implied, before Disraeli's marriage in 1839. But the careful biographer prints the date as September 3rd, 1860.

#### JUDEX.

"A singularly fortunate figure: a strongly marked influence towards the acquisition of coveted objects.

"He would gain largely by marriage in the pecuniary sense, which makes a crisis in his life.

"He would have a peaceful hearth, to his own taste, and leaving him free for ambitious objects.

"In honours he has not only luck, but a felicity far beyond the most favourable prospects that could be reasonably anticipated from his past career, his present position, or his personal endowments.

"He will leave a higher name than I should say

his intellect quite warrants, or than would now be conjectured.

"He will certainly have very high honours. Whether official or in rank, high as compared with his birth or actual achievements.

"He has a temperament that finds pleasure in what belongs to social life. He has not the reserve common to literary men.

"He has considerable veneration, and will keep well with Church and State; not merely from policy, but from sentiment and instinct.

"His illnesses will be few and quick; but his last illness may be lingering.

"He is likely to live to old age,—the close of his career much honoured.

"He will be to the last largely before the public: much feared by his opponents; but greatly beloved, not only by those immediately about him, but by large numbers to whom he is personally unknown.

"He will die, whether in or out of office, in an exceptionally high position: greatly lamented; and surrounded to the end by all the magnificent planetary influences of a propitious Jupiter.

"No figure I have drawn more surprises me than this: it is so completely opposed to what I myself should have augured, not only from the rest of his career, but from my knowledge of the man.

"He will bequeath a repute out of all proportion to

the opinion now entertained of his intellect by those who think most highly of it. Greater honours far than he has yet acquired are in store for him.

"His enemies, though active, are not persevering.

"His official friends, though not ardent, will yet minister to his success."

The Earl of Lytton's comment is: "The geomantic conclusions were not suggested by my father's views, but in glaring opposition to them. The event, which verified his divination, contradicted his judgment." And he speaks of the discsteem in which Disraeli was held "as merely a spiriting charlatan" by "mediocre men" for many years; but we have to remember, though the romance be lessened, that in 1860—if that be the document's true date—Disraeli had been married for twenty-one years, had led the Tory party, and been twice Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Disraeli at the age of twenty-six, travelling for his health, had been absent from England for about five months, when he reached Constantinople on the last day of November, 1830. He had been depressed about his slow progress towards health; but at first sight of Constantinople he owned: "I feel an excitement I thought was dead." A month later his experiences were given in the following letter to Bulwer, who was already an author with the ear of the town, and who was to go to Parliament a few months later for St. Ives. Bulwer, whose powers

of note-writing were the most prodigious ever known, had been in correspondence with Isaac Disraeli about men and books—Fuller's works and the character of Cardinal Mazarin; and Disraeli the younger, slipping in, was rewarded by praises of *Vivian Grey* and *Captain Popanilla*. A gift from Disraeli of Turkish tobacco—the only pipe-tobacco Bulwer ever smoked—followed; and then began a personal acquaintance which between such men was certain to develop quickly into friendship. Bulwer read *The Young Duke* in manuscript, and put Disraeli out of love with it by objections that he took with more good-nature than is common under those critical conditions. A few months later he was himself able to regard his book with as aloof and unpaternal an eye as Bulwer's even. "I don't care a jot about *The Young Duke*," he declared. "I never staked any fame on it. It may take its chance." This he wrote home when absent on the journey which yielded also the following letter to Bulwer.

*To Edward Lytton Bulwer (first Lord Lytton).*

"CONSTANTINOPLE,

"December 27th, 1830.

"MY DEAR BULWER,—In spite of the extraordinary times and engrossing topics on which we have fallen, I flatter myself that you will be glad to hear of my existence, and know that it is in a state not quite so forlorn as when I last had the

pleasure of enjoying your society. Since then I have travelled through Spain, Greece, and Albania, and am now a resident in this famous city.

"I cannot easily express how much I was delighted with the first country. I no longer wonder at the immortality of Cervantes ; and I perpetually detected, in the picturesque and *al fresco* life of his countrymen, the sources of his inspiration. The Alhambra, and other Saracenic remains, the innumerable Murillos, and, above all, their *olla podridas*, delighted me in turn. I arrived at Malta time enough to name the favourite horse for the races, *Paul Clifford* ; and I have since learnt, by a letter at this place, that he won the plate. While at the little military hot-house, I heard that Albania was in a flaming insurrection ; and, having always had a taste for campaigning, I hurried off with a couple of friends to offer our services to the Grand Vizier.

"We found the insurrection, by the time of our arrival, nearly crushed. And so we turned our military trip into a visit of congratulation at headquarters. I must reserve for our meeting any account of our visit. I certainly passed at Yanina ten of the most extraordinary days of my life ; and often wished you had been my companion.

"Of all the places I have yet visited, Athens most completely realised all I could have wished. The place requires no associations to render it one of the most delightful in the globe. I am not surprised that the fine taste of the dwellers in this

delicate land should have selected the olive for their chosen tree, and the violet for their favourite flower.

"I confess to you that my Turkish prejudices are very much confirmed by my residence in Turkey. The life of this people greatly accords with my taste, which is naturally somewhat indolent and melancholy, and I do not think it would disgust you. To repose on voluptuous ottomans, and smoke superb pipes ; daily to indulge in the luxuries of a bath which requires half a dozen attendants for its perfection ; to court the air in a carved caïque, by shores which are a perpetual scene ; and to find no exertion greater than a canter on a Barb ; this is, I think, a far more sensible life than all the bustle of clubs, all the boring of drawing-rooms, and all the coarse vulgarity of our political controversies. And all this, I assure you, is, without any colouring or exaggeration, the life which may be here commanded—a life accompanied by a thousand sources of calm enjoyment, and a thousand modes of mellowed pleasure, which it would weary you to relate, and which I leave to your own lively imagination.

"I can say nothing about our meeting, but pray that it may be sooner than I can expect. I send you a tobacco bag, that you may sometimes remember me. If you have leisure to write me a line, anything directed to Messrs. Hunter & Ross, Malta, will be forwarded to whatever part of the Levant I may reside in.

"I mend slowly, but mend. The seasons have greatly favoured me. Continual heat, and even here, where the winter is proverbially cold, there is a summer sky. Remember me most kindly to your brother, and believe me, ever, my dear Bulwer,

"Your most faithful,

"BENJ. DISRAELI.

"*P.S.*—I have just got through a pile of *Galignani's*. What a confusion and what an excellent pantomime 'Lord Mayor's Day ; or, Harlequin Brougham' ! Oh, for the days of Aristophanes, or Foote, or even Scaramouch ! D——n the Licensor !

"D."

People in search of the shadows which coming events are said to cast before them may find them falling on this paper in lines that spell out "my Turkish prejudices."

*To Edward Lytton Bulwer (first Lord Lytton).*

[1832.]

\* \* \* \* \*

"It seemed to me that the barriers of my life were all simultaneously falling—friendship with the rest. But *you*, too, have suffered ; and will therefore sympathise with one of too irritable a temperament, whose philosophy generally arrives too late.

"Our friendship, my dear Bulwer, has already stood many a test. If I analyse the causes of its



strength, I would ascribe them, in some degree at least, to a warm heart on my part and a generous nature upon yours.

"Then let this friendship never dissolve. For my heart shall never grow cold to you, and be yours always indulgent to

"Your affectionate friend,

"B. D."

"The friendship never did dissolve," writes the son, "because, upon both sides, it was based on a well-grounded confidence in the fine and sterling qualities to which it owed its origin. But time and circumstance gradually diminished their intercourse without abating their esteem. They had strong opinions and sympathies in common, and appeared for a time to be travelling the same road. Both were throwing off in works of imagination the thoughts and feelings suggested by a keen observation of the world around them. Both had set their hearts on getting into Parliament, that they might play their part in the one grand arena of politics. Both were fighting an unbefriended battle, and owed nothing in their literary life to the support of a clique, or in public life to the favour of a party. Both were successful in the double career they adopted. But the highest success of one was in politics, and that of the other was in literature. Here was the difference which, in spite of the parallel in their lives, led them, as time went

on, into divergent paths. It may be discerned in the earliest writings of Disraeli that his master ambition was to become a power in the State. With all his love of letters, the desire to take his place among the rulers of the world so vastly predominated that his ultimate end in literature was to use it as a ladder to political life. His native indolence, his narrow means, his pecuniary difficulties, his isolated position, his repeated checks—all were impotent to resist the indomitable will and persevering genius which carried him at length, amidst unusual acclaim, to the summit of his aspirations. With my father the passion for letters preponderated. And whereas literature was but an appendage to the political career of Disraeli, politics were only the appendage to the literary labours of his friend. Thus, when afterwards they came together as colleagues in the same Cabinet, it was the reunion of persons who had been following distinctly separate vocations, and had contracted dissimilar habits of mind. The cordiality and the sentiment remained; and in their political principles they had more in common with each other than either of them had with the mass of those around them."

This last allusion illustrates, and takes us on to, the association of Bulwer, then a nominal Radical, afterwards a Tory-Radical, with Disraeli, who was, from the first what Bulwer became. In 1832 Bulwer, anxious to get Disraeli into Parliament for Disraeli's

sake, and perhaps a little for his own ("Politics are a dull trade," says a third novelist, and politicians dull tradesmen for the most part, uncongenial enough to a Man of Feeling), was a dangerous intermediary between Disraeli and the conventional senator, as events proved.



### ***Clubs and Clubs***

*To the Secretary of the Westminster Reform Club.*

"3, PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,

"January 29th [1835]

"SIR,—Having received a letter from you this morning, apprising me that I am a threatened defaulter in the matter of the Westminster Club, I beg to inform you that I never entered the walls of the club-house but once, and that was with the intention of paying my admission fee and subscription. On that occasion I was informed that the secretary was absent in Ireland; and I freely confess to you that I was then unable to obtain any satisfactory evidence that the club had a *bona-fide* existence. If, however, I have been acting under a misapprehension, and I am to understand that the club really exists, without any view of immediate dissolution, I shall be happy to forward the cheque which you require. I am, yours, etc.,

"B. DISRAELI."

"*March 8th* [1835].

"SIR,—I enclose you a draft<sup>1</sup> for the sum you require, and as my engagements have not permitted me to avail myself of the Westminster Club, I shall feel obliged by your doing me the favour of withdrawing my name from the list of the members of the society. I am, sir, yours, etc.,

"B. DISRAELI."

A standing fable, which has the excuse of passing as a standing joke, is this: That Disraeli was once a member of the Reform Club, as Gladstone had been a member of the Carlton. Members of the two clubs exchange the blandishment: "We supplied your party with its leader." "And we yours." The genesis of the story is easily traced; and leads, as easily, to its exodus.

"Mr. Disraeli is actually a member of the Westminster Reform Club, established last year in Great George Street, Westminster, by Messrs Tennyson, Hume, and others of the Liberal party." So wrote an elector of Westminster to the *Morning Chronicle* of April 25th, 1835; and so, since that date, have others written, time after time, with this added spice—that they pitted against it Disraeli's instant denial:

"The Westminster Reform Club is a club I never heard of, and I never belonged to a political club in my life."

<sup>1</sup> This draft the club returned.

"Here," says Mr. T. P. O'Connor, "is a distinct issue of fact—an issue which decides irrevocably in favour [of] or against the personal veracity of the persons engaged in it." That is an opinion still commonly held (though for the most part with a tolerant indulgence) in the smoking-room of the Reform Club ; for the goodly association, now palaced in Pall Mall, had its first shelter in the basement and first floor of 24, Great George Street, Westminster—a portion of his own residence sub-let by Alderman Sir Matthew Wood, M.P. Clubs did not then, as now, arise fully equipped at each great corner : and the following memorandum suggests the process of a club in the making :

" WESTMINSTER CLUB.

" *April 3rd, 1834.*

"The Secretary will attend at the Club House, 24 Great George Street, from twelve to three each day till the 14th, to receive all future communications for admission to the club."

Such communications were not very numerous ; and perhaps the organisers found it a little difficult to pay the annual rent of one thousand guineas to the Alderman for rent, furniture, and service. One of these, Disraeli's friend Henry Lytton Bulwer, who had his brother's knowledge of the Radical as well as the Tory in Disraeli, asked him to join the

Westminster Club, probably with little explanation of its scope, lest the amphibious politician should refuse to be landed. Through the kindness of a present member of the Reform, and by a reference to the careful history of the club drawn up by another member, Mr. Louis Fagan, I give the following entry appearing on page 51 of the still-preserved minute-book of the precursor Westminster Club, and dated July 2nd, 1834 :

"*Resolved*,—That Mr. Disraeli, proposed by Mr. Bulwer and seconded by Dr. Elmore, should be elected a member of the club."

Mr. Disraeli, if he received news of his election, made no acknowledgment of it ; for, three weeks later, the secretary reported that "the subscriptions of the following members remain still unpaid"—Disraeli's among them ; and Henry Bulwer's, too, which suggests that perhaps he had canvassed for a club he did not really know much about, or that he had lost touch of it and no longer pressed it on Disraeli as a place of meeting. I note, too, that during these weeks Disraeli made his *début* at another club—Almack's ; and what is something to the point, made the acquaintance of Lord Lyndhurst, to whom he was immediately attracted, and who helped to draw him into the established ruts of party. Anyway, in the last month of the year the payment of the subscription—the condition precedent to membership—had not been made ; and the committee

carried the motion "That Lord Dunboyne, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Henry Lytton Bulwer be written to, informing them that the committee have observed by the banker's book that their subscriptions have not been paid, and that the secretary is to apprise them thereof." What Lord Dunboyne and Mr. Bulwer did, I do not know ; but I never heard either of them denounced as a "defaulter"—the term applied, with the usual animus, to their comrade. He, at any rate, at once sent a cheque for fifteen guineas (a large sum for him, and one for which he had incurred no legal liability), stating that he had not been able to use the club, and requesting that his name should be removed from its books. This was done ; and the committee, who probably knew more than we of the misunderstandings incident to the formation of the first membership list, resolved : "That the cheque sent by Mr. Disraeli be returned to him, and he be informed that the committee declines its acceptance, having no inclination to accept money from gentlemen whose engagements render them unable to avail themselves of the conveniences of the club."

Thus (with a surprising pleasure to see his fifteen guineas again) ended Disraeli's commerce—we cannot say connexion—with a club which, since he would not go to it, in due course came half round the political compass to him, blackballing Irish Home Rulers under the very frowns of the counterfeit

presentment of O'Connell, one of the founders of the parent house.

Two specific errors remain for exposure. "The Westminster Reform Club" was the name thrown at Disraeli at Taunton when he contested the seat in the spring of 1835. The reply, made with a brevity suited to the hustings, was: "The Westminster Reform Club is a club of which I never heard." The registers confirm Disraeli: the club was the Westminster Club, not the Westminster Reform Club, when he sent his cheque: it did not change its name to the Westminster Reform Club, and thus declare its political character, till February, 1835—only three months before the date of Disraeli's repudiation of any knowledge of it by that name. The second misstatement, originally made and since echoed, was that Hume was one of its founders—an association which was supposed to make clear to Disraeli the party character of the club and to prove continuity, on Disraeli's part, from the *rapprochement* established between him and Hume by the other Bulwer three years earlier. Here again the club books befriend Disraeli, for they show that Hume was not elected to the Westminster Club till February 7th, 1835, only the day before Disraeli requested the withdrawal of his name.

The recorders of to-day will make two leading notes on this transaction: the first the honourable payment



made by Disraeli ; the second its honourable return by the club, itself as hard-pressed as he, in sight of the insolvency which overtook it and taxed its members eleven guineas a head in the April of 1836. Yet the *Comic Spirit* shall not be grudged one last grimace. Mr. Sydney, presenting the old Westminster Club's papers to the Reform Club Library, where they now are, makes this comment: "You will perceive the curious fact that Mr. Disraeli was desirous to become a member, but the honour of his association was declined."



### *The Scramble for a Seat*

In the early summer of 1832 Disraeli had a hint of the possible elevation of Sir Thomas Baring—one of the sitting Whig members for Wycombe—to the House of Lords. That meant a vacancy which a young neighbouring politician at Bradenham House, with definite opinions but indefinite labels, was particularly anxious to fill. Disgusted by Whigs and Tories alike, he stood alone, the founder of a new National party. Into that wide-embracing fold, Tories and Radicals alike were invited to enter, and there were two or three occasions—once to Peel—when Disraeli spoke of himself as a "Radical," a name far less obnoxious to him than that of either Whig or Tory. It was a name which required, and got, a note

of explanation ; and also demanded it as applied to him in later life, when, as leader of the Tory party, he was yet described by Mr. Bernal Osborne as the "greatest Radical in that House." In 1832 the Whigs were in the way: they had made Reform their cry, yet had done little to carry out their professions; they were, moreover, an oligarchy of "the great governing families," barring the way of political aspirants—of one political aspirant in particular—with no "connexions." Disraeli had therefore a public and a personal cause against them. Bulwer, who may be allowed the credit of having liked and trusted, if he did not altogether understand him from the outset, made the most of Disraeli the Radical; the least of Disraeli the Tory; and, going to O'Connell and to Hume to get a benediction on the political Jekyll, did not breathe a word about the political Hyde. Hume, therefore, at Bulwer's request, wrote from Bryanston Square (June 2nd, 1832) to Disraeli at Bradenham, as to one "pledged to support Reform and economy in every department as far as the same can be effected consistent with the best interests of the country"—a programme common, one supposes, to all parties, and one evidently based on some carefully guarded phrasing of the candidate's.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As Hume's letter to Disraeli, and all the facts in connexion with it, were made the subject of red-hot controversy some forty months later, the full text of it should be within easy reference of the reader: "Bryanston Square, June 2nd, 1832. Sir,—As England can only reap the benefit of Reform by the electors doing their duty in selecting

To that letter of commendation Disraeli sent the following reply :

*To Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.*

"BRADENHAM HOUSE, WYCOMBE,  
"June 5th, 1832.

"SIR,—I have had the honour and the gratification of receiving your letter this morning. Accept my sincere, my most cordial thanks. It will be my endeavour that you shall not repent the confidence you have reposed in me.

"Believe me, sir, that if it be my fortune to be returned in the present instance to a reformed Parliament, I shall remember with satisfaction that that return is mainly attributable to the interest expressed in my success by one of the most distinguished and able of our citizens.

honest, independent, and talented men, I am much pleased to learn from our mutual friend, Mr. E. L. Bulwer, that you are about to offer yourself as a candidate to represent Wycombe in the new Parliament. I have no personal influence at that place, or I would use it immediately in your favour; but I should hope that the day has arrived when the electors will consider the qualifications of the candidates, and in the exercise of the franchise prove themselves worthy of the new rights they will obtain by the Reform. I hope the reformers will rally round you, who entertain liberal opinions in every branch of government, and are prepared to pledge yourself to support Reform and economy in every department as far as the same can be effected consistent with the best interests of the country. I shall only add that I shall be rejoiced to see you in the new Parliament, in the confidence that you will redeem your pledges, and give satisfaction to your constituents if they will place you there. Wishing you success in your canvass, I remain, your obedient servant, JOSEPH HUME."

"I have the honour to be, sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

We come back again and again to Wycombe before we have done with the ugly sparrings of speech that attend Disraeli's getting to his place in Parliament. For the moment, however, we look three years ahead, when Disraeli contested Taunton, still as a Democratic Tory, but bearing the official Tory label, at a by-election brought about by Mr. Henry Labouchere's acceptance of office. Out of this electoral fight and defeat arose the largely retrospective O'Connell correspondence. Very ungracious as a sign of the manners of the time, it illustrates the detachment of Disraeli the man from Disraeli the publicist. Once he had the end in view, a pen of gall, if that would do, but, if not, a sword, a bullet, was his means, coolly considered, nicely weighed. Even at seeming desperate grip with O'Connell or the *Globe* editor he is still an onlooker. He calculates while he curses. The "general effect" is the thing, he tells his sister, very much as Cardinal Newman once told Sir William Cope that he used loud words about Kingsley because, if he spoke in his ordinary tone, nobody listened. There is always a public in England, perhaps elsewhere, that either does not hear, or does not believe you are really in

earnest, until you shout. And when a man had to shout against O'Connell, the air must indeed be rent. Disraeli at Taunton, attacking the Whigs, said in the language of hyperbole that they had shaken O'Connell's "bloody hand." That is done with rhetoric now, and Tory Mr. George Wyndham has given it its quietus ; but it was repeated in middling years to weariness under Lord Carnarvon as well as under Lord Spencer, at any hint of alliance between the English occupiers and the Irish leaders of a peasantry driven by wrong and sufferings to seek the wild justice of revenge (better being denied them) in agrarian crime. The "bloody hand," though so honourable a device in heraldry, was an attribution boisterously resented by O'Connell ; who, after the ways of political warfare, may have appeared to take it in too literal and personal a sense, recognising in it a catch-phrase which, if passed into currency, would spoil some of the good business he hoped to transact with Lord Melbourne. For this was even that Disraeli for whom, at Bulwer's request, O'Connell had written a letter of recommendation to the electors of Wycombe ! Not for him the niceties of a new party—a political reformation : he saw only a flagrant case of tergiversation in the Tory candidate at Taunton, whose alien name and race made him, moreover, an easy victim for ridicule. So out poured the invective, where the environment was altogether congenial—at a political

meeting in Dublin. "In the annals of political turpitude," he said, "there is not anything deserving the name of blackguardism to equal that attack upon me. What is my acquaintance with this man? Just this. In 1831, or the beginning of 1832, the borough of Wycombe became vacant. It appears that he or some one of his name was the author of one or two novels dignified with the title of *Curiosities of Literature*.<sup>1</sup> He got an introduction to me, and wrote me a letter stating that I was a Radical reformer, and as he was also a Radical and was going to stand upon the Radical interest for the borough of Wycombe, where he said there were many persons of that way of thinking who would be influenced by my opinion, he would feel obliged by receiving a letter from me, recommending of him as a Radical. His letter to me was so distinct upon the subject, that I immediately complied with the request, and composed as good an epistle as I could in his behalf. I am in the habit of letter-writing, and Mr. Disraeli thought this letter so valuable that he not only took the autograph, but had it printed and placarded. It was, in fact, the ground upon which he canvassed the borough."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This absurdity appears in one report and not in another, but is all a piece with the rest of the speech for accuracy.

<sup>2</sup> A rollicking account of the transaction. It should be noted that Bulwer, anxious to get Disraeli into Parliament, and not Disraeli, as here stated, wrote to O'Connell; and that to Bulwer, not to Disraeli, was the reply addressed. This letter, which does not appear to put Disraeli under any excessive obligation, ran as follows: "Parliament

He was, however, defeated, but that was not my fault. The next thing I heard of him was that he had started upon the Radical interest for Marylebone, but was again defeated. Having been twice defeated, on the Radical interest,<sup>1</sup> he was just the fellow for the Conservatives; and accordingly he joined a Conservative club, and started for two or three places on the Conservative interest. How is he now engaged? Why, in abusing the Radicals, and eulogising the King and the Church, like a true Conservative. At Taunton this miscreant had the audacity to style me an incendiary. Why, I was a greater incendiary in 1831 than I am at present, if I ever were one; and if I am, he is doubly so for having employed me. Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to that is—he is a

Street, June 3rd, 1832. My dear Sir,—In reply to your inquiry, I regret to say that I have no acquaintance at Wycombe to whom I could recommend Mr. Disraeli. It grieves me, therefore, to be unable to serve him on his canvass. I am as convinced as you are of the great advantage the cause of genuine Reform would obtain from his return. His readiness to carry the Reform Bill into practical effect towards the production of cheap government and free institutions is enhanced by the talent and information which he brings to the good cause. I should certainly express full reliance on his political and personal integrity, and it would give me the greatest pleasure to assist in any way in procuring his return, but that, as I have told you, I have no claim on Wycombe, and can only express my surprise that it should be thought I had any. I have the honour to be, my dear sir, yours very faithfully, DANIEL O'CONNELL."

<sup>1</sup> Counting Marylebone (where he issued an address but did not go to the poll), thrice rather than twice. And the half-truth which describes the Radical-Tory as a Radical merely started off on its long alluring round from that day forward.

liar. He is a liar in actions and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that can tolerate such a creature—having the audacity to come forward with one set of principles at one time, and obtain political assistance by reason of those principles, and at another to profess diametrically the reverse? His life, I again say, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind; and England is degraded in tolerating, or having upon the face of her society, a miscreant of his abominable, foul, and atrocious nature. My language is harsh, and I owe an apology for it, but I will tell why I owe that apology. It is for this reason, that if there be harsher words in the British language, I should use them, because it is the harshest of all terms that would be descriptive of a wretch of this species. He is just the fellow for the Conservative club. I suppose if Sir Robert Peel had been out of the way when he was called upon to take office, this fellow would have undertaken to supply his place. He has falsehood enough, depravity enough, and selfishness enough to become the fitting leader of the Conservatives. He is Conservatism personified. His name shows him by descent a Jew. His father became a convert. He is better for that in this world.<sup>1</sup> I hope, of course, he will be the better for it in the next. There is a habit

<sup>1</sup> Where, as here, the premises is inaccurate, the insinuation founded on it seems to do something more than merely fail. But the mere hint



of underrating that great and oppressed nation—the Jews. They are cruelly persecuted by persons calling themselves Christians ; but no person ever yet was a Christian who persecuted. The cruellest persecution they suffer is upon their character, by the foul names which their calumniators bestowed upon them before they carried their atrocities into effect. They feel the persecution of calumny severer upon them than the persecution of actual force, and the tyranny of actual torture. It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also, and it must have certainly been from one of those that Disraeli descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impudent thief who died upon the Cross, whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. For aught I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him ; and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the Cross.”

From the O’Connell point of view the interest centres in the line : “No person ever yet was a Christian who persecuted ”—memorable in the place and

suggests to what charges of venal hypocrisy Disraeli would have been exposed throughout his life had his own baptism been deferred until after he had passed the schoolboy stage.

time of its utterance. If there was everything about the rest of the speech to suggest the taste and the temper that go to make the fanatic, the baiter, and the bully, that inconsistency may be set down to what were then held to be the exigencies of political controversy. Nor need we take it seriously. O'Connell, too, no less than Disraeli, may be said to have shouted—in his own Celtic fashion. Between the two men there had been some personal courtesies. A year earlier the neophyte, after dining with the Liberator, had written: "I have had three interviews of late with three remarkable men—O'Connell, Beckford, and Lord Durham. The first is the man of the greatest genius; the second of the greatest taste; and the last of the greatest ambition." Even at Taunton, Disraeli had prefaced his "bloody hand" strictures by saying: "I am myself O'Connell's admirer, so far as his talents and abilities are concerned." Faced now by the virulent personal onslaught which was to be the test of his mettle, Disraeli sent a challenge to O'Connell. The sequel is well known. O'Connell's conscience, which should certainly, with this contingency in view, have been tenderer in affairs of the tongue, would not allow him to fight—he had already in the duel with D'Esterre killed his man. Morgan O'Connell, M.P., the son, had, however, fought in his father's behalf with Lord Alvanley, and to him therefore Disraeli wrote:

"31A, PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,

*"Tuesday, May 5th, 1835.*

"SIR,—As you have established yourself as the champion of your father, I have the honour to request your notice to a very scurrilous attack which your father has made upon my conduct and character.

"Had Mr. O'Connell, according to the practice observed among gentlemen, appealed to me respecting the accuracy of the reported expressions before he indulged in offensive comments upon them, he would, if he can be influenced by a sense of justice, have felt that such comments were unnecessary. He has not thought fit to do so, and he leaves me no alternative but to request that you, as his son, will resume your vicarious duties of yielding satisfaction for the insults which your father has too long lavished with impunity on his political opponents.

"I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

O'Connell the younger replied (in a letter carried by Mr. French) that while he would not allow other people to insult his father, he did not hold himself accountable for any insult his father might put upon others. Lord Alvanley's offence, for instance, had been the calling of a meeting at Brooks's Club, of which both were members, to consider O'Connell's

conduct in abusing Lord Alvanley as a "bloated buffoon." Though this explanation was no direct incitement to Disraeli to insult O'Connell the elder, Disraeli may be excused for so considering it, at least for so handling it. He sent a second note to O'Connell the younger :

"31A, PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,  
"Tuesday, May 5th.

"SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, delivered to me by Mr. Fitzstephen French, by which I learn that you do not consider yourself 'answerable for what your father may say.'

"With regard to your request that I should withdraw my letter, because its character is insulting to yourself, I have to observe that it is not in my power to withdraw the letter, which states the reason of my application ; but I have no hesitation in assuring you that I did not intend that it should convey to you any personal insult.

"I have the honour, etc.,

"B. DISRAELI."

No reply came ; but Disraeli, in the interval of waiting, was sharpening his pen for a lengthy indictment of the Irish leader.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An irrelevant namesake of O'Connell's, but not, as he claimed, a kinsman, addressed to Disraeli the following letter : "I understand that you have sent a challenge to my illustrious kinsman, the great Daniel O'Connell, well knowing that owing to a solemn vow he could not meet you ; but I, sir, as his relative, and endorsing every

*To Mr. Daniel O'Connell, M.P. for Dublin.*

"MR. O'CONNELL,—Although you have long placed yourself out of the pale of civilisation, still I am one who will not be insulted, even by a Yahoo, without chastising it. When I read this morning in the same journals your virulent attack upon myself, and that your son was at the same moment paying the penalty of similar virulence to another individual on whom you had dropped your filth, I thought that the consciousness that your opponents had at length discovered a source of satisfaction might have animated your insolence to unwonted energy ; and I called upon your son to re-assume his vicarious office of yielding satisfaction for his shrinking sire. But it seems that gentleman declines the further exercise of the pleasing duty of enduring the consequences of your libertine harangues. I have no other means, therefore, of noticing your effusion but by this public mode. Listen, then, to me.

word he has said of you, am prepared to give you that satisfaction which one gentleman owes to another, and am ready to meet you at any time and place you name—here, in France, in Germany, or even at the foot of that mount where your impenitent ancestor suffered for his crimes." Even as in a duel a bullet is not always delivered, so we may perhaps conclude that this letter, though composed, was never sent. Its writer, who went by the nickname of Lord Kilmallock, was once introduced by O'Connell the younger as "my friend Mr. O'Connell." "My kinsman, your father would have said," pleaded the namesake. "My father's vanity," said Morgan O'Connell. That touch of a Disraelian humour does seem to make "all the O'Connells" of *his kin*

"If it had been possible for you to act like a gentleman, you would have hesitated before you made your foul and insolent comments upon a hasty and garbled report of a speech which scarcely contains a sentence or an expression as they emanated from my mouth ; but the truth is, you were glad to seize the first opportunity of pouring forth your venom against a man whom it serves the interests of your party to represent as a political apostate. In 1831, when Mr. O'Connell expressed to the electors of Wycombe his anxiety to assist me in my election, I came forward as the opponent of the party in power, which I described in my address as 'a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction'—the English Whigs, who in the ensuing year denounced you as a traitor from the throne, and every one of whom only a few months back you have anathematised with all the peculiar graces of a tongue practised in scurrility. You are the patron of these men now, Mr. O'Connell ; you, forsooth, are 'devoted' to them. I am still their uncompromising opponent. Which of us is the most consistent ?

"You say that I was once a Radical, and am now a Tory. My conscience acquits me of ever having deserted a political friend, or ever having changed a political opinion. I worked for a great and avowed end in 1831, and that was the restoration of the balance of parties in the State : a result which I believed to be necessary to the honour of the realm, and the happiness of the people. I never

advocated a measure which I did not believe tended to this result ; and if there be any measures which I then urged, and now am not disposed to press, it is because that great result is obtained.

“In 1831 I should have been very happy to have laboured for this object with Mr. O’Connell, with whom I had no political acquaintance, but who was a member of the Legislature, remarkable for his political influence, his versatile talents, and his intense hatred and undisguised contempt of the Whigs. Since 1831 we have met only once, but I have a lively recollection of my interview with so distinguished a personage. Our conversation was of great length, and I had a very ample opportunity of studying your character. I thought you a very amusing, a very interesting, and a somewhat over-rated man. I am sure on that occasion I did not disguise from you my political views ; I spoke with a frankness which, I believe, is characteristic of my disposition. I told you I was not a sentimental, but a practical politician ; that which I chiefly desired to see, was the formation of a strong but constitutional government that would maintain the empire ; and that I thought if the Whigs remained in office they would shipwreck the State. I observed then, as was my habit, that the Whigs must be got rid of at any price. It seemed to me that you were much of the same opinion as myself, but our conversation was very general. We formed no political alliance, and for a simple reason. I con-

cealed neither from yourself nor from your friends the repeal of the Union was an impassable gulf between us, and that I could not comprehend, after the announcement of such an intention, how any English party could co-operate with you. Probably you then thought that the English movement might confederate with you on a system of mutual assistance, and that you might exchange and circulate your accommodation measures of destruction ; but even Mr. O'Connell, with his lively faith in Whig feebleness and Whig dishonesty, could scarcely have imagined that, in the course of twelve months, his fellow-conspirators were to be my Lord Melbourne and the Marquis of Lansdowne. I admire your scurrilous allusions to my origin. It is quite clear that the 'hereditary bondsman' has already forgotten the clank of his fetters. I know the tactics of your Church ; it clamours for toleration, and it labours for supremacy. I see that you are quite prepared to persecute.

"With regard to your taunts as to my want of success in my election contests, permit me to remind you that I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. No threatening skeletons canvassed for me ; a death's-head and cross-bones was not blazoned on my banners. My pecuniary resources, too, were limited. I am not one of those public beggars that we see swarming with their obtrusive boxes in the chapels of your creed ; nor am I in possession of a princely revenue arising from



a starving race of fanatical slaves. Nevertheless, I have a deep conviction that the hour is at hand when I shall be more successful, and take my place in that proud assembly of which Mr. O'Connell avows his wish to be no longer a member. I expect to be a representative of the people before the repeal of the Union. We shall meet at Philippi; and rest assured that, confiding in a good cause, and in some energies which have not been altogether unimproved, I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will make you at the same time remember and repent the insults that you have lavished upon

" BENJAMIN DISRAELI."

The deliberation of his periods indicates a certain pleasure in them, enough, one hopes to compensate the writer for the rank unreason of the whole episode.<sup>1</sup> The challenge to Morgan O'Connell was sent on May 5th. On the next day he wrote to his sister:

"I send you the *Times* and *Morning Post*. There is but one opinion among all parties—viz., that I have squabashed them. I went to D'Orsay immediately. He sent for Henry Baillic for my

<sup>1</sup> Whatever else they are, I cannot regard these letters as those of a man passing through "a paroxysm of rage, humiliation, and despair," or "a fury that had for a moment bereft him of sense." Mr. O'Connor, when he formed that opinion, had not before him those "Home Letters" which must have made the mitigating difference in so much of his count against Disraeli's early days,

second, as he thought a foreigner should not interfere in a political duel ; but he took the management of everything. I never quitted his house till ten o'clock, when I dressed and went to the opera, and every one says I have done it in first-rate style."

Never was so light-hearted a protagonist amid issues of life and death. The enemy was not drawn ; and three days later the future Prime Minister of England was arraigned in a police court.

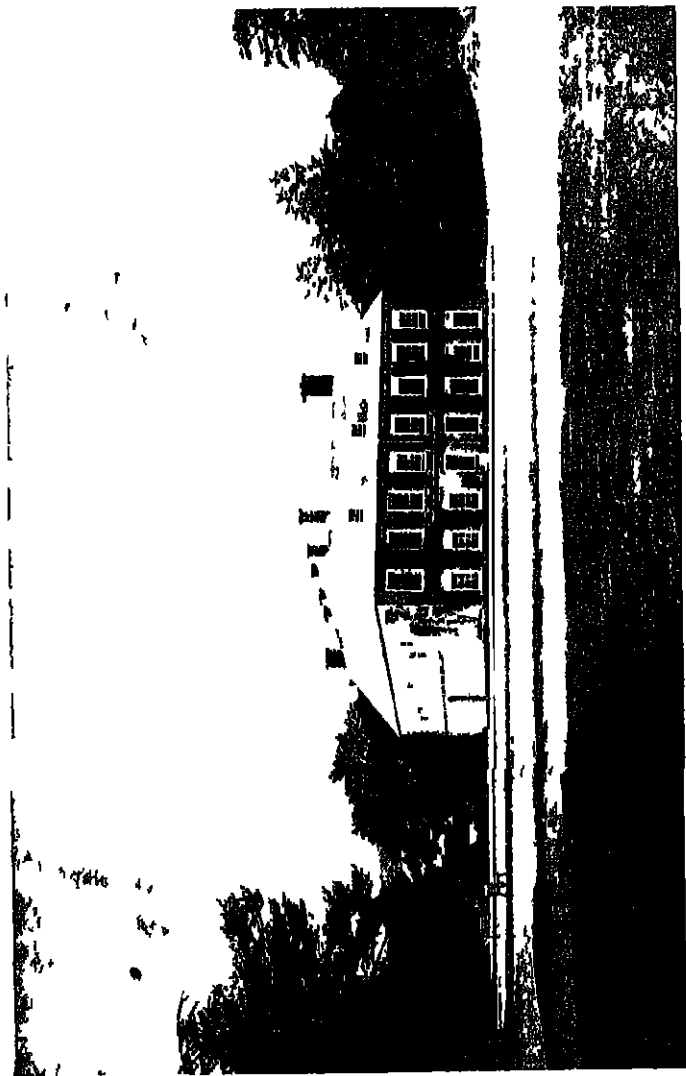
" This morning, as I was lying in bed, thankful that I had kicked all the O'Connells and that I was at length to have a quiet morning, Mr. Collard, the police officer of Marylebone, rushed into my chamber and took me into custody. In about an hour and half, being dressed (having previously sent to S——), we all went in a hackney coach to the office, where I found that the articles were presented by a Mr. Bennett, residing in some street in Westminster, and an acquaintance of the O'Connells. We were soon dismissed, but I am now bound to keep the peace in £500 sureties. As far as the present affair was concerned, it was a most unnecessary precaution, as if all the O'Connells were to challenge me, I could not think of meeting them *now*. I consider, and every one else, that they are lynched."

Perhaps the most mortifying thing of all to Disraeli

was the hesitation which his people at home felt in approving a correspondence and a combat of the kind.

"It is very easy for you to criticise," he says, without any resentment, "but I do not regret the letter: the expressions were well weighed, and without it the affair was but clever pamphleteering. Critics you must always meet. W. told me the last letter was the finest thing in the English language, but that the letter to Dan was *too long*; others think that perfect. One does not like the Yahoo, as coarse; others think it worthy of Swift, and so on. The general effect is the thing, and that is, that all men agree I have shown pluck."

They, in the placid back-waters of Bradenham, as we in wider seas of life, may lift up wondering eyes and deprecating hands before this foam of words. But if they lived long enough to look back and to say that *Disraeli knew*, so may we say it. Certain it is that an attempt was then made to crush Disraeli—the audacious man with the audacious name, in itself almost provocative to a horsewhip, if not a rack; a man audaciously dressed and with an impertinent pertinence in his naming of political things to the rejection of the usual shibboleths: who, moreover, had written a book, not so good as this person's and that, but far more widely read. He had not the passwords, and he must perish. Here, at any rate, the Whigs and O'Connell could foregather, with



*Photo by H W Tamm & Co, Oxford*

J RADENHAM HOUSE. BUCKS

The residence of the De-laet family, 1829-1849



"compact" and with "treaty," and nobody feel compromised or annoyed. Across his political tomb they could grasp hands, proudly bloody at last. Disraeli stood alone; he must so comport himself that he could not be left long in that forlorn minority of one. The offence which called forth O'Connell's simulation of moral indignation was no offence at all, seen now by those who look back calmly from peaks which Disraeli anticipatngly scaled; and, what is more—let us have done with cant—the men in that *mêlée* did not want to see clearly; they did not mean to be convinced by anything Disraeli might say. For his purpose, then, it was even more important to show them that he was insensitive than to show them that he was right. Had he flinched an eyelash, he had given himself over to the enemy. If there is no sweetness (save his sister's) to be read into or between these lines, and assuredly no beauty, there is, at any rate, an ascertained strength—that courage to face a bully, or any number of bullies, in which Disraeli, despite a nervous organism, showed himself not once deficient from first to last. And Disraeli continued to feel elation over this O'Connell pen-bludgeoning of his :

"There is a gentleman opposite," he said at Maidstone in 1837, "who seems proud of O'Connell's name. I can assure him there is none he could mention which makes me feel more proud; for, standing alone, I cowed the ruffian and his race."

A few weeks later, when Disraeli met O'Connell at Philippi, one likes to hope that the Irish leader did not, on that occasion, lead his followers in the outcry that drowned Disraeli's first speech; but, after all, it is hoping that O'Connell was more than human. Yet great men are great in their impulses, even as towards scorn, so also towards generosity. Anyway, if O'Connell's memory for an affront, real or supposed, was long, even as his race's for an injury, Disraeli's was short, as haply became a son of fathers who had perforce to make swift peace with the persecutor. Knowing him, we expect his later allusions to O'Connell to be fair and even friendly; and in that expectation we are not disappointed.

If Disraeli devoted to the O'Connell episode a disproportionate attention and vocabulary, we, who read now, may in turn give disproportionate importance to Disraeli's part in it. Only two days sufficed for this first round—two days in which the common routine of life's labour was duly done. When, at the close of the initiatory hostilities, Disraeli said that every one thought he had triumphed, he meant the "every one" whose opinion mattered to him. In the *Globe*, then a Whig organ, a different estimate was made. At the end of the year (1835) the old charges about the Radical candidature at Wycombe were renewed in the course of a review of Disraeli's *Vindication of the English Constitution*, and when he

made a reply only a mutilated passage of it was printed. It was this :

“Your assertions that I applied to O’Connell to return me to Parliament, and that he treated that application with irreverent and undisguised contempt, are quite untrue. I never made any application to Mr. O’Connell to return me to Parliament ; and the only time I ever met Mr. O’Connell, which was in society, he treated me with a courtesy which I trust I returned.”

The *Globe*, wrong alike in large things and small, in its attribution of Radicalism, in the ordinary sense of the term, to Disraeli, and in its mistaking Bulwer’s application to O’Connell as Disraeli’s own, had no word of apology. That it had made the same assertions months before without contradiction was put forward as a justification for disinterring the old calumny ; and O’Connell’s version in his Dublin speech, the inaccuracy of which could have been demonstrated by the least show of inquiry, was reproduced. Disraeli, who was thus, at the outset, to exhaust his interest in nailing to the counter the false coinage in circulation with his superscription, and who early learned the error of devoting to an evening paper the energies that were meant for mankind, thereupon addressed to the *Times* the following letter, containing incidentally a statement of the political faith in him :



To the Editor of the "*Times*."

"December 26th, 1835.

"SIR,—The editor of the *Globe*, in his paper of Friday, stated that I had applied to Mr. O'Connell to return me to Parliament as a joint of his tail, which is an utter falsehood, and substantiated his assertion by a pretended quotation from my letter in inverted commas, which is a complete forgery. I called the attention of the editor of the *Globe* to these circumstances in courteous language, and the editor of the *Globe* inserted my letter in his columns, suppressing the very paragraph which affected his credit.

"The editor of the *Globe*, accused of a falsehood and convicted of a forgery, takes refuge in silly insolence. It tosses its head with all the fluttering indignation and affected scorn of an enraged and supercilious waiting-woman. It is the little Duke of Modena of the press, and would rule Europe with its sceptre of straw, and declare a general war by the squeak of a penny trumpet. But its majestic stalk turns out to be only a waddle, and its awful menace a mere hiss. As for 'breaking butterflies on a wheel,' this is the stock simile of the *Globe*, an image almost as original as the phoenix, and [one] which, I have invariably observed in controversy, is the last desperate resource of confuted commonplace and irritated imbecility.

"An anonymous writer should, at least, display

power. When Jupiter hurls a thunderbolt, it may be mercy in the god to veil his glory with a cloud ; but we can only view with feelings of contemptuous lenity the mischievous varlet who pelts us with mud as we are riding by, and then hides behind a dust-hole. The editor of the *Globe*, I am assured, has adopted the great Scipio Africanus for his illustrious model. It is to be hoped that his Latin is more complete than his English, and that he will not venture to arrest the attention of admiring senates in a jargon which felicitously combines the chatter of Downing Street with the bluster of the Strand.

"I have the honour to remain, sir, your very obedient servant,

" B. DISRAELI."

The *Globe* carried on the war of words. "Our tenderness towards volatile insects disinclines us to break a butterfly on a wheel oftener than necessary." A little of this sort of badinage goes a long way—and a short one. Yet there is a little sentence that illustrates—what we all desire—the happening of the unlikely. "Fifty years hence," said the *Globe*, "Mr. Disraeli and we shall, we trust, be better friends ; though, by the way, his sanguine prospect of attaining that period convinces us that he is, as we supposed, not only the younger, but the youngest of the Disraelis." Disraeli did not quite live to see the

fulfilment of the prediction made thus in scorn. But he lived long enough to read, with a pleasure made piquant by past hostilities, articles in praise of himself and his policy in the evening newspaper that blushed permanently pink in memory of those early indiscretions. The term "fifty years" seems almost fateful when we meet it again in the *Globe* in one of its issues in the year 1868: "If Mr. Disraeli would enter the Chamber of Peers he would take his seat with a better right to honour than any man who has been elevated during the last half-century."

Meanwhile, Disraeli had to begin the year 1836 with another *Globe* encounter, illustrating only too patently what he had earlier called in a letter to Bulwer (published on another page) "all the coarse vulgarity of our political controversies."

*To the Editor of the "Times."*

"December 28th, 1835.

"SIR,—I have often observed that there are two kinds of nonsense—high nonsense and low nonsense. When a man makes solemn accusations which he cannot prove, quotes documents which are not in existence, affects a contempt which he cannot feel, and talks of 'breaking butterflies on a wheel,' I call this high nonsense. When the same individual, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, writhing under a castigation which he has himself provoked, and which he will never forget, utters

at the same time half an apology and half a snivelling menace, and crowns a rigmarole detail which only proves his own incapacity of reasoning by a swaggering murmur of indifference worthy of Bobadil after a beating, I call this low nonsense. The editor of the *Globe* is a consummate master of both species of silliness. Whether the writer of the articles of the *Globe*<sup>1</sup> be a member of Parliament, as is formally asserted every week by a journal of great circulation, and has never been contradicted, or whether he be a poor devil who is paid for his libel by the line, is to me a matter of perfect indifference. The thing who concocts the meagre sentences, and drivels out the rheumy rhetoric of the *Globe*, may in these queer times be a senator, or he may not ; all I know is, if the Whigs cannot find a more puissant champion to attack me than the one they have already employed, I pity them. Their state is more forlorn than ever I imagined. They are now in much the same situation as the good Lady Bellenden with her well-accounted cavalier ; at the first charge he proves, after all, only to be Goose Gibbie. I will not say, with Macbeth, that I shall fall by 'none of woman born,' but this I will declare, that the Whig Samson shall never silence me by 'the jaw of an ass.' The editor of the *Globe* talks, sir, of our united thunder ; I cannot compliment him, and all his members of Parliament, even on a single flash of lightning. On Friday, indeed,

<sup>1</sup> The writer was Charles Buller, M.P.

there was a sort of sparkish movement in his lucubrations, which faintly reminded me of the frisky brilliancy of an expiring squib ; but on Monday he was as flat and as obscure as an Essex marsh, unilluminated by the presence of even a single *ignis fatuus*.

"I did not enter into a controversy with the editor of the *Globe* with the inglorious ambition of unhorsing a few Whig scribblers—these are indeed 'small deer,' but because I thought there was a fair chance of drawing our gobemouche into making a specific accusation, which I have long desired, and of ridding myself of those base innuendoes and those cowardly surmises with which the most gallant cannot engage, and which the most skilful cannot conquer. The editor of the *Globe* has realised my most sanguine expectations. Like all vulgar minds, he mistook courtesy for apprehension, and, flushed and bloated with the anticipated triumph of a dull bully, he permitted me by his base suppression to appeal to your ready sense of justice, and thus has afforded me an opportunity of setting this question at rest for ever.

"It turns out that the sole authority of the *Globe* for its bold and detailed assertions is Mr. O'Connell's speech at Dublin, which the editor declares that I have never answered. I thought my answer to Mr. O'Connell was sufficiently notorious ; I believe it is universally acknowledged, among all honest folks, that Mr. O'Connell, as

is his custom, has the baseness first to libel me, and then to skulk from the consequences of his calumny. However, to put the *Globe* out of court on this head, I here declare that every letter of every syllable of the paragraph quoted in its columns from Mr. O'Connell's speech is an unadulterated falsehood—from my novels, which the *de facto* member for Dublin learnedly informs us are styled *The Curiosities of Literature*, to his letter to me, which was never written, and which he assures us was lithographed throughout Wycombe.

“I asserted in the *Globe* that I professed at this moment precisely the same political creed as on the hustings of Wycombe. I am prepared to prove this assertion. I was absent from England during the discussions on the Reform Bill. The bill was virtually, though not formally, passed when I returned to my country in the spring of 1832. Far from that scene of discord and dissension, unconnected with its parties, and untouched by its passions, viewing, as a whole, what all had witnessed only in the fiery passage of its intense and alarming details, events have proved, with all humility be it spoken, that the opinion I formed of that measure on my arrival was more correct than the one commonly adopted. I found the nation in terror of a rampant democracy. I saw only an impending oligarchy. I found the House of Commons packed, and the independence of the House of Lords announced as terminated. I recognised a repetition

of the same oligarchical *coups d'état* from which we had escaped by a miracle little more than a century before ; therefore I determined to the utmost of my power to oppose the Whigs.

“Why then, it may be asked, did I not join the Tories? Because I found the Tories in a state of stupefaction. The Whigs had assured them that they were annihilated, and they believed them. They had not a single definite or intelligible idea as to their position or their duties, or the character of their party. They were haunted with a nervous apprehension of that great bugbear ‘the People,’ that bewildering title under which a miserable minority contrives to coerce and plunder a nation. They were ignorant that the millions of that nation required to be guided and encouraged, and that they were that nation’s natural leaders, bound to marshal and to enlighten them. The Tories trembled at a coming anarchy ; what they had to apprehend was a rigid tyranny. They fancied themselves on the eve of a reign of terror, when they were about to sink under the sovereignty of a Council of Ten. Even that illustrious man who, after conquering the Peninsula, ought to deem nothing impossible, announced that the King’s Government could not be carried on. The Tories in 1832 were avowedly no longer a practical party ; they had no system and no object ; they were passive and forlorn. They took their seats in the House of Commons after the Reform Act as the

Senate in the Forum, when the city was entered by the Gauls—only to die.

“I did not require Mr. O’Connell’s recommendation, or that of any one else, for the borough the suffrages of whose electors I had the honour to solicit. My family resided in the neighbourhood. I stood alike on local influence and distinctly avowed principles, and I opposed the son of the Prime Minister. At the first meeting of the electors I developed those views which I have since taken every opportunity to express, and which are fully detailed in my recent letter to Lord Lyndhurst. Opposition to the Whigs at all hazards, and the necessity of the Tories placing themselves at the head of the nation, were the two texts on which I preached, and to which I ever recurred ; the same doctrines are laid down in my letter to the electors of Marylebone. The consequence of this address was, that all the Tories of the town, and all those voters who were not Whigs, but who from a confusion of ideas were called Radicals, offered me their support. Did this gratifying result prove my inconsistency? I think I may assert it only proved the justness of my views and the soundness of my arguments. If the Tories and Radicals of England had united, like the Tories and Radicals of Wycmbc, four years ago, the oligarchical party would long since have been crushed ; had not the Tories and a great portion of the Radicals united at the last general election, the oligarchy would not



now have been held in check. Five years hence I trust there will not be a Radical in the country ; for if a Radical mean, as it can only mean, one desirous to uproot the institutions of the country, that is the exact definition of a Whig.

“ My opinions were specifically expressed in my subsequent address to the electors. I believe, sir, it has appeared in your columns. I called upon the electors to support me in a contest with a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction, hostile alike to the liberties of the subject and the institutions of the country.

“ And now, sir, for Mr. O’Connell. Mr. O’Connell, in 1832, was in a very different situation to Mr. O’Connell in 1835. *The Globe*, which historically informs us that in 1832 I was to become a member of Mr. O’Connell’s tail, forgets that at that period Mr. O’Connell had no tail, for this was previous to the first general election after the Reform Act. Mr. O’Connell was not then an advocate for the dismemberment of the empire, the destruction of the Church, and the abolition of the House of Lords. His lips overflowed with patriotism, with almost a Protestant devotion to the Establishment, with almost English admiration of the constitution. Our contest at Wycombe was a very warm one ; every vote was an object. A friend of mine, interested in my success, knowing that I was supported by that portion of the constituency styled Radicals, applied to Mr. O’Connell and Mr.

Hume, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to know whether they had any influence in Wycombe, and requested them to exercise it in my favour. They had none, and they expressed their regret in letters to this gentleman, who forwarded them to me at Wycombe ; and my committee, consisting of as many Tories as Radicals, printed them : this is the history of my connection with Mr. O'Connell.

“ Even had it been in the power of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume to have interposed in my favour at Wycombe, my political allegiance would not have been the expected consequence of their assistance. Those gentlemen would have aided me from the principles I professed, and the measures I advocated in my address, and with a perfect acquaintance of the political position which I had assumed. They knew, at least one of them, that I had declined a distinct recommendation to another constituency, where my return would have been secure, because I avowed my resolution to enter the House of Commons unshackled ; they were perfectly aware that the Tory party supported me in the borough, because some members of the ministry, panting and pale, had actually knocked them up one night to request them to exert their influence against me on that score ; and they were well apprised if I were returned I should offer a hostility without exception to every measure proposed by the Government.

“ The truth is, that Mr. Hume and Mr. O'Connell already stood aloof from the Whigs, and the least

prescient might detect that they already meditated that furious opposition in which, in the course of a few months, they had embarked. They were not anxious to see the Whigs too strong; they would not have regretted to witness the return of a member whose hostility to the administration was uncompromising, particularly as they knew that I was really independent, totally unconnected with the Tory party, and considered of importance. I, on the other hand, had good reasons to recognise in these gentlemen and their connexions the brooding elements of an active opposition—the seeds of a combination which, in the then state of affairs, I considered indispensable, and the only means of salvation to the country: and, had I been returned to Parliament in 1832, I should have considered it my duty to support them in most of their measures, and especially their hostility to the Coercion Bill.

“It has been asserted that I stood upon Radical principles. Why, then, did the Whigs oppose me as a Tory? I challenge any one to quote any speech I have ever made, or one line I have ever written, hostile to the institutions of the country; on the contrary, I have never omitted any opportunity of showing that on the maintenance of those institutions the liberties of the nation depended; that if the Crown, the Church, the House of Lords, the corporations, the magistracy, the poor laws, were successfully attacked, we should fall, as once before we nearly fell, under a grinding oligarchy, and inevitably be

governed by a metropolis. It is true that I avowed myself the supporter of triennial Parliaments, and for the same reasons as Sir William Wyndham, the leader of the Tories against Walpole—because the House of Commons had just been reconstructed for factious purposes by the Reform Act, as in the earlier days by the Septennial Bill. I thought with Sir William Wyndham, whose speech I quoted to the electors, that the Whig power could only be shaken by frequent elections. Well, has the result proved the shallowness of my views? What has shaken the power of the Whigs to the centre? The general election of this year. What will destroy the power of the Whigs? The general election of the next. It is true that I avowed myself a supporter of the principle of the ballot. Sir William Wyndham did not do this, because in his time the idea was not in existence, but he would, I warrant it, have been as hearty a supporter of the ballot as myself, if, with his principles, he had been standing on the hustings in the year of our Lord 1832, with the third estate of the realm reconstructed for factious purposes by the Whigs, the gentlemen of England excluded from their own chamber, a number of paltry little towns enfranchised with the privilege of returning as many members of Parliament as the shires of this day, and the nomination of these members placed in a small knot of hard-hearted sectarian rulers, opposed to everything noble and national, and exercising an usurious

influence over the petty tradesmen, who are their slaves and their victims.

"These were the measures which, in the desperate state of our commonwealth in 1832, I thought might yet preserve the liberties of this country, expecting, as I did, to receive every day a bulletin of a batch of a hundred new peers; and that the Whigs of 1832, after having emulated, in regard to the independence of the House of Commons, the machinations of the Whigs of 1718, would be even more successful than their predecessors in their plots against the independence of the House of Lords.

"I was unsuccessful in my election. The son of the Prime Minister beat me by some votes under twenty. The Whigs managed to get him elected by the influence of 'a great public principle.' This 'great public principle' was more intelligible than the one which seated Mr. Abercromby in his chair. My opponent was selected out of 'gratitude' to Lord Grey. In future I suppose he will be returned out of 'ingratitude' to Lord Grey, for that seems more the fashion now.

"More than three years after this came my contest at Taunton against the Master of the Mint, to which the editor of the *Globe* has alluded. I came forward on that occasion on precisely the same principles on which I had offered myself at Wycombe; but my situation was different. I was no longer an independent and isolated member of the political

world. I had felt it my duty to become an earnest partisan. The Tory party had in this interval roused itself from its lethargy ; it had profited by adversity ; it had regained not a little of its original character and primary spirit ; it had begun to remember, or to discover, that it was the national party of the country ; it recognised its duty to place itself at the head of the nation ; it professed the patriotic principle of Sir William Wyndham and Lord Bolingbroke, in whose writings I have ever recognised the most pure and the profoundest sources of political and constitutional wisdom ; under the guidance of an eloquent and able leader, the principles of primitive Toryism had again developed themselves, and the obsolete associations which form no essential portion of that great patriotic scheme had been ably and effectively discarded. In the great struggle I joined the party with whom I sympathised, and continued to oppose the faction to which I had ever been adverse. But I did not avow my intention of no longer supporting the questions of short Parliaments and the ballot, merely because the party to which I had attached myself was unfavourable to those measures, though that, in my opinion as to the discipline of political connexions, would have been a sufficient reason. I ceased to advocate them because they had ceased to be necessary. The purposes for which they had been proposed were obtained. The power of the Whigs was reduced to a wholesome measure ; the balance

of parties in the State was restored ; the independence of the House of Lords preserved. Perpetual change in the political arrangements of countries of such a complicated civilisation as England is so great an evil, that nothing but a clear necessity can justify a recourse to it.

"The editor of the *Globe* may not be able to comprehend these ideas. I am bound to furnish my antagonists with arguments, but not with comprehension. The editor of the *Globe* I take to be one of that not inconsiderable class of individuals ignorant of every species and section of human knowledge. His quavering remarks on my letter to Lord Lyndhurst convince me that he is as ignorant of the history of his own country as that of the pre-Adamite sultans. The smile of idiot wonder with which he learned for the first time that there were Tories in the reign of Queen Anne could only be commemorated by Hogarth. For once his pen seemed gifted with the faculty of expression, and he has recorded in his own columns a lively memento of his excited doltishness. What does it signify ? His business is to chalk the walls of the nation with praises of his master's blacking. He is worthy of his vocation. Only it is ludicrous to see this poor devil white-washing the barriers of Bayswater with the same self-complacency as if he were painting the halls of the Vatican.

"The Whigs are now trying to cheer their spirits

by their success in the corporation elections, as if the temporary and inevitable results of personal and local pique were to be attributed to their influence. How are the mighty fallen ! Four years ago the Whigs were packing a Parliament ; now they are content to pack a town council. After having nearly succeeded in ruining an empire, these gentlemen flatter themselves that they may still govern a parish.

“ I am not surprised, and assuredly not terrified, by the hostility of the Whigs. They may keep me out of Parliament, but they cannot deprive me of one means of influencing public opinion as long as in this country there is a free press ; a blessing which, had they succeeded in Louis Philippising the country, as they intended, would not, however, have long afforded us its salutary protection. I feel that I have darted at least one harpoon in the floundering sides of the Whig leviathan. All his roaring and all his bellowing, his foaming mouth and his lashing tail, will not daunt me. I know it is the roar of agony and the bellow of anticipated annihilation, the foam of frenzy and the contortions of despair. I dared to encounter the monster when he was undoubted monarch of the waters, and it would indeed be weakness to shrink from a collision with him now, in this merited moment of his awful and impending dissolution.

“ I have trespassed, sir, too much on your truly valuable columns, but I am sensible of the



indulgence, and have the honour to remain, sir,  
your very obliged and obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

He was in the vein; and ten days later another letter appeared:

*To the Editor of the "Times."*

*"January 8th, 1836.*

"SIR,—I have heard of a man at Waterloo who contrived to fight on some little time after his head was shot off. This is the precise situation of the editor of the *Globe*; he continues writing, as the other continued fighting, without any brains; but the least skilful can in a moment detect that his lucubration of last night is not the result of any intellectual exertion, but merely of a muscular motion.

"After a week's trembling silence, the editor of the *Globe* has drivelled out nearly three columns of dead man's prose, and, with the aid of a hysterical giggle about a misprint of a single letter in my last communication to you, would fain persuade us he is still alive. But we all know that the editor of the *Globe* is veritably deceased, and this letter must only be considered as a part of his funeral obsequies.

"I need not notice my 'awful declaration' about the Whigs, which the ghost of the *Globe* has quoted, because these words were never uttered by me,

and because at the time they were peremptorily contradicted in your journal, twenty-four hours after they were anonymously asserted to have been expressed. No one ever attempted to substantiate them, and the lie died away like many others. As for the extracts from my address to which the spectre has also appealed, I beg to inform the apparition that I have not 'thrown over' any of the excellent objects which are enumerated in it. The Reform Bill may be, as the editor of the *Globe* for once pertinently expresses it, a dishonest trick of the oligarchical Whigs, but it does not follow that, like many other tricks, it may not lead to consequences which the tricksters never anticipated.

"As for the honourable member for Middlesex, he has never attacked me, and I have therefore ever felt bound by the courtesy of society not to introduce the name of that gentleman into these discussions more than was absolutely necessary; but do not let the editor of the *Globe* again commit his old error, and attribute to apprehension what courtesy alone prompted. I repeat, that Mr. Hume's letter, to which the editor of the *Globe* originally alluded, was addressed to a third person.<sup>1</sup>

"Four-and-twenty hours after it appeared at Wycombe, by some extraordinary circumstance a letter written by the same gentleman was circulated there in favour of Colonel Grey by the committee

<sup>1</sup> A confusion of memory. It was addressed to Disraeli, though given to Bulwer.

of my gallant opponent. Whatever might be the value of Mr. Hume's letter, I did not choose to pass by in silence a proceeding which appeared to every one very extraordinary, therefore I instantly saw Mr. Hume, who afforded me a satisfactory explanation. He afforded it to me by way of letter, and concluded that letter with the expressions quoted by the ingenious editor of the *Globe*. This letter was necessarily printed ; but this is not the letter which has been appealed to in this controversy. All the details about my introduction to Mr. Hume, with a letter from Mr. Bulwer, and my frequent conferences with Mr. Hume at his house, are, as usual with the *Globe*, utter falsehoods. I never saw Mr. Hume but once in my life, and that was at the House of Commons ; the object of that interview was to request an explanation of the circumstance which I have mentioned, and to that circumstance the interview was confined.

“The same reason that deterred me from unnecessarily introducing the name of Mr. Hume, precludes me from noticing the anonymous insinuations of the editor of the *Globe* respecting Lord Durham ; and only that reason.

“Like the man who left off fighting because he could not keep his wife from supper, the editor of the *Globe* has been pleased to say that he is disinclined to continue this controversy because it gratifies my ‘passion for notoriety.’ The editor of the *Globe* must have a more contracted mind, a paltrier spirit,

than even I imagined, if he can suppose for a moment that an ignoble controversy with an obscure animal like himself can gratify the passion for notoriety of one whose works at least have been translated into the languages of polished Europe, and circulate by thousands in the New World. It is not then my passion for notoriety that has induced me to tweak the editor of the *Globe* by the nose, and to inflict sundry kicks upon the baser part of his base body ; to make him eat dirt, and his own words, fouler than any filth ; but because I wished to show to the world what a miserable poltroon, what a craven dullard, what a literary scarecrow, what a mere thing, stuffed with straw and rubbish, is the *soi-disant* director of public opinion and official organ of Whig politics.

"I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

" B. DISRAELI."

Rather unluckily (for our patience) Mr. Hume and his secretary now allowed themselves to be rallied to the *Globe*. The battle already fought by Disraeli had to be fought again with none of the enkindling zest that at first carries the combatant to some deed of daring ; nay, London, one thinks, might have become almost a deserted village itself at the mere prospect of this restatement of the episodes of the old electoral wars. For us, who look backward, there is at least this cumulative interest with which

Disraeli's after-career invested these early assaults upon the seriousness of his aims and the fixity of his tenure of opinion. If spite (one can call it no less) was a larger ingredient in public affairs then than now, the increase of toleration has been won for us principally by Disraeli: partly by what he himself bore from the mud thrown at every step forward—we see now its futility as well as its meanness—and partly by that good temper and that personal deference with which, during his own years of political leadership, he delivered his most penetrating volleys into the sides of his opponents. Party government to-day, even with the barriers broken down Disraeli-wise, may seem little more than a travesty to the onlooking philosopher; but in the days with which we are now dealing it was in effect civil war.

*To Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.*

"34, UPPER GROSVENOR STREET,  
"Monday evening [January 11th, 1836].

"SIR,—You have, at length, dropped the mask; and, in becoming my avowed assailant, you permit me to relate circumstances which would, long ago, have silenced the idle controversy with which the evening organ of Whig politics has attempted to cloak its recent disgraceful discomfiture. I have mentioned in my letter to the editor of the *Times* that I have only met you once, and that was at the House of Commons: it appears you were then

attending the Indian Committee ; you know very well under what circumstances I was forced to apply to you personally on that occasion ; you know you had conducted yourself towards me in a manner which was not only a violation of all the courtesies, but of the common honesty of life ; you know the extreme difficulty which I had in extracting from you a satisfactory explanation, and I cannot forget, though you may, the offers of service which on that occasion you made me, and which I declined. Some months after this, a vacancy, which never occurred, being threatened in the borough of Marylebone, I announced myself in opposition to the Whig candidate, who was already in the field. In the course of my canvass, I called upon Mr. Joseph Hume, an influential elector of that borough, one, too, recently so profuse in his offers of service, and now in violent opposition to that party which I had ever resisted ; you were, I was informed, severely indisposed ; you were not even seen by me, but I explained to your clerk or secretary the object of my visit, and, that no error might occur, I wrote a letter to your house, which I delivered to that secretary ; doubtless, being a canvassing epistle, it was sufficiently complimentary. It is obvious you take very good care of these documents, but why is not this letter produced ? Because it would have explained how your secretary remembered my calling at your residence, and because it would have confirmed my previous account ; and

when I did call, I had not the honour of seeing yourself. Your 'impression' that I did call upon you in Bryanston Square at the beginning of your letter, at the end of your communication swells into certainty. Why were you more certain at the termination of your epistle than at the beginning? Were you strengthened by your secretary's recollection of me? I have shown how we chanced to meet; the truth is, you wished to confirm an anonymous libeller in his statement, that I had sought a former interview with you before I became a candidate at Wycombe, and it is obvious, from the cautious mendacity at the commencement of your letter, that you were aware that you were countenancing a lie.

"But I have not done with you. Whether you wrote a letter of me or to me at Wycombe, whether I saw you when I called at your house or not, whether we met half a dozen times or only once, what, after all, has this miserable trifling to do with the merits of the question? This controversy commenced by the evening organ of the Whigs being instructed by its masters to attack and answer my *Vindication of the English Constitution*; the unlettered editor of the *Globe*, as ignorant of the history as he is of the language of his country, puzzled and confounded, sought refuge in the vile and vulgar expedient of personally abusing the author; if he cannot redeem his oft-repeated bluster of reputation, let his masters hire another, and abler,

hack to baffle that exposure of the plots and fallacies of their unprincipled faction. The illogical editor of the *Globe*, incompetent to distinguish between principles and measures, accused me of political tergiversation, because with the same principles as I had ever professed I was not of opinion that in 1835 two particular measures were necessary which I deemed expedient in 1832. I stated my reasons why I no longer deemed those measures expedient. The editor of the *Globe* has never answered them, but if the editor of the *Globe* requires any further information on this subject, if he be still anxious to learn how it may be possible, without any forfeiture of political principles, to hold different opinions at different seasons respecting political measures, I refer him to his patron, Lord John Russell, the whilom supporter of triennial Parliaments; or his ancient master, Lord Spencer, the umquhile advocate of the ballot. If these right honourable personages cannot succeed in introducing a comprehension of this subject into the unparalleled skull of the editor of the *Globe*, why, then he must even have recourse to that Magnus Apollo of the Treasury Bench, Sir John Hobhouse, who will doubtless make it most lucidly obvious to him how a man who commences a political career, pledged to annual Parliaments and universal suffrage, may duly dwindle into a low Whig upholder of a senatorial existence of seven years, and a suffrage limited to the mystical boundary of a ten-pound franchise.



"But, sir, as you are so happy in addressing letters to the editor of the *Globe*, and since your political consistency is so universally acknowledged that you, as you classically express it, cannot put pen to paper without producing some fresh evidence of public integrity, permit me to ask you what is your opinion of the consistency of that man who, after having scraped together a fortune by jobbing in Government contracts in a colony, and entering the House of Commons as the Tory representative of a close corporation, suddenly becomes the apostle of economy and unrestricted suffrage, and closes a career, commenced and matured in corruption, by spouting sedition in Middlesex, and counselling rebellion in Canada?

"Your obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

The question of Disraeli's political faith at Wycombe, which a glance at his addresses and speeches would have settled, was to be decided by Disraeli's personal veracity, and that was to depend on the accuracy of his memory for events of three or four years earlier in a very crowded life. If he were found in error, he was a liar and done with; if others were in error—they were but human. It was on this sort of "heads I win, tails you lose" gamble that Disraeli the Alien was expected to play with John Bull the Just for many years; one might say, in a sense, until the close of his life. In this case the lucky link was

forthcoming, and Bulwer, who had, we may guess, rather underlined the Radical items in the Disraelian programme—short Parliaments, the ballot, and untaxed knowledge—when he solicited the help of O’Connell and of Hume for this anti-Whig candidate, his friend, at any rate bore witness to the bare contested facts, apart from principle, and bore witness in Disraeli’s behalf. An old letter of his to Disraeli, which removed the incidents narrated from the mere effort of memory, was found and published in Disraeli’s next letter to the *Times*. Of Bulwer himself let it be said that even he, who saw two sides of most questions—a fatal power of vision, he thought—did not understand the Disraelian blend of Tory-Radical. Writing at this time (January 7th, 1836) to Mr. Cox of Taunton, Bulwer says: “I question his philosophy; but I do not doubt his honour.”

*To the Editor of the “Times.”*

*“January 13th [1836].*

“SIR,—I had hoped not to have troubled you again on the subject of Mr. Hume, his public statements, and his private secretary, but a circumstance has just occurred, very gratifying to me, which, I should think, must be scarcely less to every manly mind who rejoices in the exposure of a virulent conspiracy. A friend of mine has discovered among my papers at Bradenham a letter of Mr. Bulwer,

which originally led to the Wycombe correspondence. Here it follows :—

*"Copy of a letter from Mr. Bulwer to Mr. Disraeli,  
June 3rd, 1832.*

"MY DEAR DISRAELI,—I have received from my friend Mr. Hume a letter addressed to you, which I have forwarded to Bradenham. In case you should not receive it in such good time as may be wished, I may as well observe that in it Mr. Hume expresses his great satisfaction at hearing you are about to start for Wycombe—his high opinion of your talents and principles—and while he regrets he knows no one at Wycombe whom otherwise he would certainly endeavour to interest in your behalf, he avails himself of his high situation in public esteem to remind the electors of Wycombe that the Reform Bill is but a means to the end of good and cheap government, and that they ought to show themselves deserving of the results of that great measure by choosing members of those talents and those principles which can alone advocate the popular cause, and which Mr. Hume joins with me in believing you so eminently possess. You will receive his letter at latest on Tuesday morning, and so anxious was he in your behalf, that he would not leave London, though on matters of urgent private business, until he had written it.

"Assuring you, etc.,  
"E. L. BULWER."

"That I may not be considered under any circumstances ungrateful to a gentleman who was 'so anxious on my behalf that he would not leave

London, though on matters of urgent private business,' I will just observe that almost ere the ink was dry of the letter in which I acknowledged the receipt of his favour, and the tone of which alone would prove we had then no personal acquaintance, I found this same Mr. Hume, without giving any notice to Mr. Bulwer or myself of his intention, not only exerting his influence in London against me, but absolutely writing canvassing letters in favour of my opponent. On seeking an explanation from him of this conduct—the only time, I repeat, and as I now prove, I ever saw Mr. Hume—he informed me that he could not, on reflection, countenance so violent an opponent to the Whigs.

"This letter of Mr. Bulwer, sir, accounts for the only error which I have committed in my statement, although I wrote from memory. Recollecting that I became acquainted with the contents of Mr. Hume's letter in a communication from Mr. Bulwer, I took it for granted, as in the instance of Mr. O'Connell, that the letter was addressed to Mr. Bulwer, and that Mr. Bulwer communicated the substance of it to me at Bradenham; an error so trivial hardly exceeds a clerical mistake. Every other statement I have made—though, I repeat, merely writing from memory and in haste—is not only substantially, but absolutely correct. Every statement that Mr. Hume has made, though writing at leisure and with an appeal to documents, is substantially and absolutely

incorrect. I had no motive to misrepresent the circumstances, for they had nothing to do with the merits of my case. Mr. Hume had every motive to misrepresent the circumstances, for on their misrepresentation his case entirely depended. In attempting to crush a political opponent, he has been hoist with his own petard, and afforded the public a further illustration of his proverbial veracity. As for the poor editor of the *Globe*, he of course feels like any other tool who has failed in a dirty job. But for the private secretary, who recollects my calling at the house with Mr. Bulwer, seeing and conferring with Mr. Hume, and receiving from his own hands his celebrated autograph, what an invaluable memory he has!

"I have the honour to be, sir, your obliged and obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

Here we get quit of the pother caused by the Ideality of the Young Politician in a country which thinks in words rather than speaks its thoughts, and which especially preferred, at that date, the mutton-chop whiskers of Pam before all the ringlets of Disraeli. Yet our customary postscript, in all that concerns the Disraeli of combat, is not here denied us. Of Hume, who had seized a free moment, when he was not

Taking the sense  
Of the House on a saving of thirteen pence,

to join in this attempt to extinguish him, the Disraeli of after-years, Disraeli the forgiver, was able to make a just and even a generous estimate :

"They," he wrote of the Radical party in his *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, "mainly depend on the multifarious information and vast experience of Mr. Hume, who towers amongst them without a rival. Future Parliaments will do justice to the eminent services of this remarkable man, still the most hard-working of the House, of which he is now the father. His labours on public committees will be often referred to hereafter, and then, perhaps, it will be remembered that, during a career of forty years, and often under circumstances of great provocation, he never once lost his temper."

One word more of Mr. Hume. If he did not successfully father Disraeli at his Parliamentary birth, he did at least as unexpected a thing—gave a name to the party of young men who put themselves under Disraeli's leadership in a movement of social regeneration. On this point there is now no better authority living than the Duke of Rutland, who thus replies to a query I put to him : "I believe the story is true that the name 'Young England' was given by Mr. Hume, who, annoyed at being interrupted in one of his dreary statistical speeches, attributed the interruption to 'Young England, which had come down after dinner in white waistcoats,' etc."

Another postscript indicative of Disraeli's essential good-nature must be made. It has to do with "The Delectable Mr. Hayward"—Disraeli so described Abraham Hayward in a letter telling his sister of his fellow-guests at the Deepdene, Christmas, 1840.

Ten years later this "delectable" *Edinburgh Reviewer* wrote to Lady Morgan: "Protection is dead, and Disraeli very nearly, if not quite, forgotten. How soon one of these puffed-up reputations goes down—it is like a bladder after the pricking of a pin." Protection, fifty years later, seems but sleeping; and the "bladder" was not, after all, very effectually pricked by Abraham's pen. In 1853 Hayward was anxious to do an article in the *Edinburgh* on Mr. G. H. Francis's "critical biography" of Disraeli. "I know every incident of his life," he boasts to his editor, "and it was I who furnished C. Buller with the materials of his Disraeli articles in the *Globe* in 1836-7." With a resource in metaphor almost equalling in banality the bladder allusion of the last letter, Hayward rather inconsequently adds: "His fate is still wavering in the balance, though he is beginning to kick the beam." With Hayward's assistance the struggle would be at an end. The editor was a little shy; and the "delectable" Hayward further alludes to these *Globe* articles for his enlightenment; saying that Dizzy, charged with the Westminster Club, "admitted the club and said he did not know its politics!"—a

statement, or rather a mark of exclamation, which the reader can test by the full account of that transaction given elsewhere in these pages. "I cut him till we met at Deepdene after his marriage" is another Hayward saying, and of the very visit which labelled him the "delectable."

The revisions in *The Revolutionary Epic* made by Disraeli in the 1864 edition were stigmatised by Hayward, writing to Gladstone, as "a trick." Gladstone, as to whom some people were under the impression that he liked to hear these things, did not on this occasion take the Hayward line, or took it only very faint-heartedly. "The amendments made are, I think, not purely literary; but I do not see that it is worth his while to make them. With respect to the franchise, I think Disraeli always maintained that when the time came for dealing with Parliamentary reform, the labouring classes must be rather freely admitted to the suffrage." In 1873, when Gladstone's Irish University Bill was defeated by a majority of three, without Disraeli's acceptance of office, Hayward wrote to the baffled but not ousted Minister: "What a time you must have had of it owing to the tricks of Disraeli!" Tricks! Years went on, and Abraham Hayward could not learn. At the close of 1875 he declaims against Disraeli's purchase of the Suez Canal shares. "Surely," we find him saying to Lord Carlingford, "Parliament will never sanction such a step as this." Wrong in



his immediate anticipation of events, he nevertheless proceeds with his further prophecy: "It is Disraeli all over, *de l'audace, de l'audace, toujours de l'audace!* To buy a partnership can only be the source of constant embarrassment." What vengeance does the lapse of a quarter of a century bring on men like Hayward; the predicted "source of embarrassment" has proved a constant source of strength and of wealth. But, after an event, nobody could be wiser than Hayward. "Dizzy's peerage was just what I expected," he tells Sir William Stirling-Maxwell in 1876. The Gladstonian majority of one hundred and twenty at the General Election of 1880 brought him delight. He counted with glee the Liberal successes on the first day. "The beginning," he says, "always influences the middle and the end—people like to be on the winning side." The great "moral" victory, which was also a great electoral victory, is thus analysed by one of the men who laboured hardest to obtain it: "People like to be on the winning side!" If Abraham Hayward did but measure the public corn in his own bushel, if Success—the god, we get to believe, of a hundred of his contemporaries—really was his test of eminence, then for him the growing fame of Lord Beaconsfield is Hayward's epitaph as a reader of men and things. Disraeli's unsuspecting phrase, "the delectable," remains, and will outlive all memory of Hayward's rancours.



*Photo by H. W. Tennant & Co., Oxford*  
THE DINING-ROOM AT BRADENHAY HOUSE

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"Dizzy was advertised with Rush" (a then talked-about murderer) "as the latest addition to Madame Tussaud's Repository": this is another Haywardism, a sort of continuation of the "kicking the beam" simile. At the end of days, notes of admiration, not notes of derision, became his occupation in presence of Mrs. Langtry. He even corresponded with Mr. Gladstone about that lady's glories and charms. Happy man! he had found a real *gefius* at last.



#### *Home of his Youth*

"There is no place like Bradenham."—*Home Letter*, 1830.

The Disraelis left Bloomsbury Square for the country in 1829; and after a stay at Hyde House, Hyde Heath, took up their abode at Bradenham. It was in the August of 1830, when he had been three months absent on his long foreign tour, that he wrote in effect: "There is no place like home"—that home being Bradenham. His letters to his sister enshrine the associations the place had for her and for him in their loving intercourse; and in *Endymion*, the last of his novels, he babbled of that green lawn, those beloved walls, the avenue, and the anteroom where he had lain in a sort of trance, the beginning of the illness that drove him abroad.

"At the foot of the Berkshire downs, and itself on a gentle elevation, there is an old hall with gable ends and lattice windows, standing in grounds which were once stately, where there are yet glades like terraces of yew trees which give an air of dignity to the neglected scene. Mr. Ferrars" (a man in whom we get abundant hints at Isaac Disraeli) "was persuaded to go down alone to reconnoitre the place. It pleased him. It was aristocratic, yet singularly inexpensive. The house contained an immense hall which reached the roof, and which would have become a baronial mansion, and a vast staircase in keeping; but the living rooms were moderate, even small, in dimensions, and not numerous. The land he was expected to take consisted only of a few meadows, and a single labourer could manage the garden."

To this pleasant place, within easy reach of London, Disraeli repaired from the stress of town at the season's end, or when the writing humour seized him. Hither, too, came his friends Bulwer, D'Orsay, and Lyndhurst—all having henceforth a good word for Bradenham.

END OF VOL. I.

